

A SUCCESSFUL WILDFLOWER PLANTING

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First of all, be sure you know what you will get. A wildflower planting is not like an annual garden. It is like a meadow. The following steps should be used for a successful wildflower planting:

1. Analyze your site. Determine the soil type (sand, silt, clay muck), moisture and amount of sunlight. Take a soil sample, if necessary, and have it tested for pH and organic matter. Your county cooperative extension service offers this service along with sampling instructions. Usually a tight, wet clay soil is not suitable for many wildflower species.
2. Eliminate competitive vegetation such as quack grass, lawn sod, etc. by spraying a herbicide or by tilling the soil down 4 inches at least 2 times. For spraying herbicides use one application and then use another application 2–3 weeks later. You can also use a herbicide first and till 2–3 weeks later instead of using two herbicide applications.
3. Choose wildflowers that are suitable to your site, such as a mixture of annuals and perennials that will grow in the specific climate and conditions, preferably species that are native to your area.
4. Prepare a seedbed by working to about a 2" depth. If existing vegetation is minimal and if other factors exist, such as slope, working the soil by hand-raking may be sufficient. If the seedbed has been plowed or deeply rototilled, the area should be firmed by rolling before planting.
5. Spread the seed with a hand-cranked broadcast spreader; or by hand broadcasting the seed.
6. Another consideration is whether or not to add non-competitive grasses with your wildflowers. For instance, adding 1 pound of wildflowers to 7 pounds sheep fescue or hard fescue. Approximately 4–6 pounds of wildflowers per acre should be mixed with 28–42 pounds of the grasses. It is important to note that kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and some fescues will not compete with wildflowers so you will end up with the grass and no flowers. So be careful.
7. You can incorporate the seeds into the soil by raking very lightly; and then roll with a lawn roller or tamp down with a rake so the seeds maintain seed to soil contact and will not wash away.

8. Water will speed germination and establishment. You should maintain the 4–6 weeks depending on the weather conditions. If it gets very dry at the height of the summer you will need to keep watering wildflower plantings to ensure their blooming.
9. If weeds become a problem snip off the head and pull the weed and its root close to the ground. The purpose of this is so the seeds from the head will not shake onto the soil and regerminate.
10. To maintain the wildflower planting mow at 4" to 6" in late October or after all the flowers have completed blooming. If you were unable to do this in the fall you should do it in the early spring to maintain the meadow planting. Another option is to burn the site, however, you must obtain a permit to do this and you should do this with an experienced burner.

NOTE: Mulch only with a paper mulching material, do not use straw or hay because of competition.