

# How to make a meadow with native wildflowers

Even if you only have a small area, you can enjoy a meadow full of native wildflowers. Your local wildlife will thank you for it. All you have to do is mow differently...

Choose an open, sunny area for your meadow, with no nettles or brambles. Then take a closer look in spring and summer – what's already growing there?

A good meadow can be home to more than 100 different grasses and flowers.

If your area is bare ground or has fewer than five wildflowers



## Create a meadow

In late summer or early autumn, cut the grass short, create bare ground and seed the area.

- You'll need a mower, strimmer or scythe and a rake to collect the mowings because if left, they will decompose and enrich the soil with nutrients. Wildflowers thrive in nutrient-poor soil.
- You can compost the mowings or create habitat piles to encourage other wildlife.
- Create at least 50% bare ground by raking vigorously or by using a hand scarifier that can be rented. Larger areas are best done with a harrow.
- If you have a larger area and know a local farmer, you can seed the area using green hay.
- Or you can buy native wildflower seeds from your local seed supplier. Double-check the seed is not sourced from outside the UK. You can find out more information at [plantlife.org.uk/which-seed-should-i-use](http://plantlife.org.uk/which-seed-should-i-use).
- Try mixing your seed with sand for easier spreading. Sprinkle and gently trample in. During dry spells, water if possible, but don't wash away the seeds!
- In the coming months, pull up any Creeping Thistle and Dock, or cut the flower heads off before they set seed. These can spread fast and smother wildflowers.
- Don't worry if your meadow looks a bit plain in its first year. Many native perennials take a couple of years to establish.

From the second year onwards follow the annual management plan

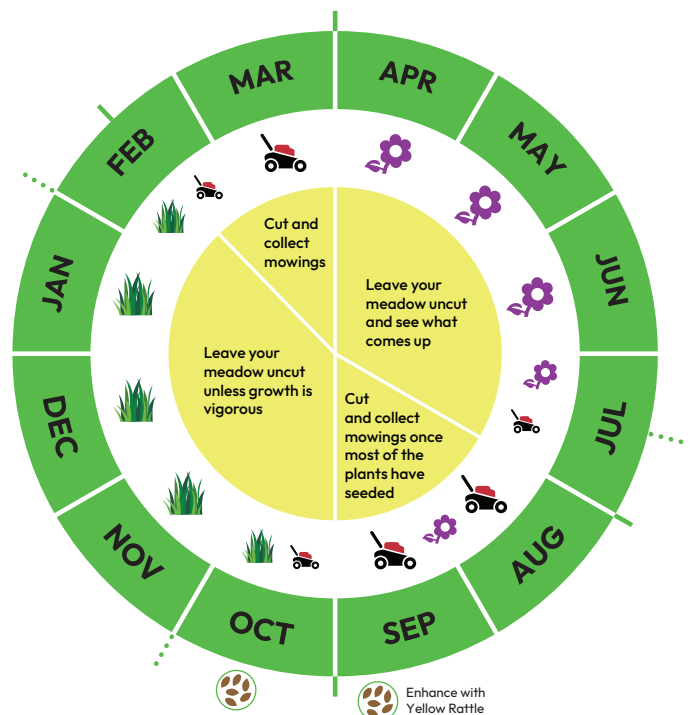
If your area has more than five different wildflowers already



## Enhance a meadow

If you already have some wildflowers present, simply follow the annual plan below to see even more flowers return over time.

Mow Grow No Mow



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## Vary the cuts

- Skip the spring cut if you can see wildflowers growing
- Avoid heavy machinery if the site is very wet
- Try varying your cutting time from year to year or cut part of the meadow in July and the rest in later months
- If you can, leave mowings lying for a week for all the seeds to drop before removing
- If the grass is growing vigorously over winter, you can do an extra cut and collect if the ground is not too wet
- After a few years, your grass might start growing less vigorously and you may be able to stick with one annual cut only in late summer
- Some areas or margins can be left uncut over the winter – these are great for hibernating insects and mammals, and provide seed for birds



## Enhance with Yellow Rattle

In the second year after cutting the meadow, consider sowing Yellow Rattle seeds. This plant grows off grass roots, reducing vigorous grassy growth and creating more space for wildflowers.



## Enjoy your meadow...

Why not try a meadow celebration event, seed collecting or [scything demonstrations](#)? Or yoga in the meadow, wildflower painting or photography? Anyone can take part in [No Mow May](#) or the [UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme](#).

## Wildflowers to encourage in your meadow



Cat's-ear  
*Hypochaeris radicata*



Red Clover  
*Trifolium pratense*



Oxeye Daisy  
*Leucanthemum vulgare*



Common Sorrell  
*Rumex acetosa*



Common Knapweed  
*Centaurea nigra*



Bird's-foot-trefoil  
*Lotus corniculatus*



Yarrow  
*Achillea millefolium*



Yellow Rattle  
*Rhinanthus minor*