

Getting mini-Meadow ready!

We hope you will want to sow your own mini-meadow! If you decide to have a go, here's how to prepare the ground prior to sowing.

The first thing to do is select a sunny spot in your garden for your mini-meadow. This will be popular with the countless bees, butterflies and other sun-loving insects, which will be attracted to your meadow.

Don't worry if you have poor soil – in fact, the worse it is, the better the meadow will be!

Mark an area equivalent to one square metre (1m²) using sticks and string. If you prefer to have a circular meadow or even an irregular shape, that is fine. To mark out a circular meadow, use a peg and a piece of string 22 inches (or 112cm) long.

Next, strip off any turf or other vegetation (stack the turf in a shady spot to create another area of habitat!). If there are any nasty perennial weeds, such as brambles and thistles in your meadow area try to dig these out.

If your soil is quite rich, and assuming you have enough energy, consider turning it over to bring the poorer subsoil to the surface and bury the fertile topsoil. Do not apply fertiliser or soil conditioners! Then rake to break up lumps and create a tilth in readiness for seed-sowing.

If all this sounds like hard work, you can just use a wire grass rake to vigorously scratch out some of the grass and other vegetation to expose (ideally) up to 50% bare soil to sow into.

Either way, the ground for your mini-meadow is now ready for you to sow your free seed!

Sowing Your Seeds

The seed we have given you is suitable for sowing on heavy clay soil - just like the natural soils of our region.

Sow as soon as possible at the end of March or the beginning of April. When you are ready, choose a dry day with no wind. It is best not to sow if your soil is very wet, though our soil generally starts to dry out from mid-February in most years.

Sow Thinly It is important to sow the seed very thinly. A 4gm pack might not seem very much but it is ample for a One Square Metre mini-meadow. To get an even spread, it can be helpful to mix the seed with a little dry sand.

Do not cover the seed as it needs sunlight to germinate. Firm it gently to get good contact between the seed and the soil. If no rain is forecast, gently water, but take care not to wash the seed away. Do not let the soil dry out and water regularly as necessary.

Maintenance and Care

To maintain your meadow all you need to do is to cut it back at the end of the summer or in early autumn and remove all the cut material (put this on your compost heap or in your Council green waste rubbish bin if you have one). If you have the energy, it can be helpful to give your mini meadow a good rake with a wire rake after cutting to remove moss and other debris and to expose some bare soil so that any fallen wildflower seeds can germinate. This will make your meadow even better and better each summer!

Good luck and happy sowing!

Share your Successes and Challenges

We would like to know how you get on, so please send photos of your mini-meadow throughout the spring and summer to Horsham FNC at FNCHorsham@sky.net.