

Wildflowers add aesthetic appeal to any property. Old fields, low meadows, and other sunny sites can be managed for native wildflowers to attract butterflies, hummingbirds and songbirds, and offer a display of color and interest from summer into fall.

ESTABLISHMENT: Wildflowers do not generally require a lot of soil preparation, but seeds need good soil contact to germinate.

SOIL TEST: Four to six weeks before planting have the soil analyzed for pH level and fertility. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System office or Natural Resource Conservation Service can assist with questions regarding soil analysis.



SITE PREPARATION: An effective method of killing weeds and grass is spraying the area to be planted with a herbicide such as glyphosphate (Roundup). Refer to the label for ornamental site preparation. A second application may be necessary before planting if there is weed regrowth. If a second application is required, wait at least two week before direct sowing of seeds.

Lightly cultivate the soil with a rake or hand tool to a depth of 1/2 - 2 inches. Deeper tilling brings viable weed seed to the surface.

SEED APPLICATION: On small areas, broadcast seeds evenly by hand or use a drop spreader. It is helpful to mix clean, dry sand with the seed to add volume and aid in even distribution. The recommended rate is one to two parts sand to one part seed. Cover lightly with soil, firm in by stepping on the area, and mulch lightly with straw.

SEEDING RECOMMENDATIONS:

<u>Perennial Species</u>	<u>Seeding Rates (lbs/acre)</u>
Black-eye Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)	2
Butterfly weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	10
Coreopsis/Tickseed (<i>Coreopsis lanceolata</i>)	10
Moss verbena (<i>Verbena tenuisecta</i>)	6
Ox-eye daisy (<i>Chysanthemum leucanthemum</i>)	5
Showy primrose (<i>Oenothera speciosa</i>)	1
Stiff Vervain (<i>Verbena stricta</i>)	3

GERMINATION: Some seeds will germinate in 10 – 20 days, whereas others will germinate in early spring of the following year. Best germination occurs in planting locations with at least six hours of sunlight per day, little foot traffic and frequent watering or rainfall. If the site is on an erodible slope, apply a low nitrogen fertilizer (8-8-8) at the seedling stage to help establish wildflowers.

MAINTENANCE: During the first two years, good maintenance to control weeds is critical. The area can later be maintained by mowing. Mow after the nesting season (mid March through late August) to remove woody competition and redistribute seed heads. Mow wildflower meadow high, leaving at least 8 – 12 inches, so crowns of the plants are not injured.

- Get a good identification manual and learn to use it. One must be able to identify plants in order to work with them properly.
- Inventory flowering plants at regular intervals during the flowering season. Late August will reveal an entirely different array of flowers than in early June.
- Learn the effects of forestry practices on wildflowers. Indiscriminate use of herbicides, cleaning fence rows, burning, grazing, timber operations, flooding, and even excessive foot traffic can inhibit growth of wildflowers.
- Allow small areas to grow into wildflower areas: a small strip along a fence row, a rocky outcrop, an unused portion of an old field, a wood lot, a short stretch of streambank or a small marsh. Include as many different habitat types as possible. Check areas periodically for “new” species brought in by water, wind, birds or animals.

WILDFLOWER SEED SOURCES

COMPANY	ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER
Holland Wildflower	P.O. Box 328, Elkins, AR 72727	800-648-3737
Magnolia Nursery & Display Garden	12615 Robers Road, Chunchula, AL 36521	205-675-4696
Native Gardens	5737 Fisher Lane, Greenback, TN 37742	615-856-0220
Sunlight Gardens	174 Golden Lane, Andersonville, TN 37705	800-272-7396
Rock Island Wildflowers	P.O. Box 57, Rock Island, TN 38581 www.rockislandwildflowers.com	931-686-2360
Herod Seed	908 North 17 th Street, Richmond, VA 23219	804-643-7683
Pennington Seed Inc.	P.O. Box 290, Madison, GA 30650 www.penningtonseed.com	800-285-SEED
Parkseed	1 Parkton Ave, Greenwood, SC 29647 www.parkseed.com	800-213-0076

SOURCE: Alabama Guide Sheet # AL 327, USDA



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