



A63 Growing wild flowers



Wild flowers help create a healthy organic garden for growing food. They provide food and shelter for beneficial insects that eat pests and pollinate plants. Wild flowers are endlessly fascinating and easy to grow in the smallest or largest of spaces. This activity tells you how to get started and basic maintenance of your wild flowers.

Resources

- Wild flower seeds
- Suitable growing space, eg pot, window box, in a flower bed, along a field edge, with cereal crops, etc. Most wild flowers prefer a low nutrient soil
- Tools including rake, shears, trowel

Top tip



Managing wild flower meadows

Meadows need extra, carefully timed maintenance. See the following for advice.

Pictorial Meadows www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk

National Wildflower Centre www.nwc.org.uk

Activity

- 1 Choose your wild flowers based on soil conditions. See table in G4.12 and ask local suppliers for advice. Never take wildflower seed or plants from the wild.
- 2 Autumn and spring are the best times for planting wild flowers.
 - a If starting a new area, clear grass or weeds (see A14 for technique). Create a 'stale seedbed' before sowing, ie leave a prepared area for a couple of weeks until weed seedlings germinate. Hoe these off and sow without further disturbing the ground. Scatter flower seeds on the soil surface, sowing half in one direction and half in the other. Tamp down lightly with the back of a rake.
 - b If developing an existing area of grass or wild flowers, either sow seed in patches of bare soil, or plant out home-grown/bought modules of young wild flowers. See A22 for technique.
- 3 After plants have finished flowering and set seed, cut foliage, leave to wilt for a few days, rake up and remove. The seed left by annual wild flowers will germinate in spring. Perennial wild flowers will regrow from a crown of new leaves and flower again the following year.

Extended activity

Find out about your local wild flowers. Which species are common in your county? Carry out a survey in or near the school. Are any declining in numbers?

Health & Safety	Be careful when handling soil, washing hands afterwards. Ensure adult supervision. <i>See also Health and Safety Guidelines (Section SG1.2)</i>
Further information	A14 Clearing weeds and grass A22 Transplanting young plants G4.12 Using wild flowers