

## TREES, SHRUBS AND FLOWERING PLANTS FOR SPECIFIC HABITATS

### WILDFLOWER MEADOWS AND CORNFIELDS

The lists given below are a selection of the wild flowers and grasses that are suitable for creating meadows and cornfields. It is assumed that the chosen site has an open, sunny aspect and is not shaded; that nutrient levels are low or in the process of being reduced; and that the chosen site has been cleared of highly competitive weeds such as nettles, docks and thistles. It is recommended that the pH of the soil is tested, using a basic testing kit obtainable at garden centres as the pH will influence the choice of species.

Details about site preparation, planting or seeding, and management are described in the references listed under “Resources”; as are more detailed lists of species together with their pH preferences.

**Grasses:** the following are examples of reliable performers in most meadow contexts and can form the starting point for basic seed mixes.

Common bent: *Agrostis capillaris*  
Crested Dog's Tail: *Cynosurus cristatus*  
Crested Hair Grass: *Koeleria macrantha*  
Meadow fescue: *Festuca pratensis*  
Meadow barley: *Hordeum secalinum*  
Quaking grass: *Briza media*  
Red fescue: *Festuca rubra*  
Sheeps fescue: *Festuca ovina*  
Smooth meadow grass: *Poa pratensis*  
Sweet vernal grass: *Anthoxanthum odoratum*  
Yellow oat grass: *Trisetum flavescens*

**Cornfields:** traditionally, cornfields are temporary features of ploughed fields, colonised by colourful flowering annuals, rather than grasses. Once established, a cornfield will become self-sustaining through copious seed production, but may need top-up re-seeding in the first couple of years.

Corn poppy (Field poppy): *Papaver rhoeas*  
Corn marigold: *Chrysanthemum segetum*  
Cornflower: *Centaurea cyanus*  
Corncockle: *Agrostemma githago*  
Corn chamomile: *Matricaria chamomilla*  
Mayweed: *Matricaria inodora*  
Red dead nettle: *Lamium purpureum*

**Spring Meadows:** traditionally, meadows are permanent landscape features maintained by the grazing of domesticated animals. In the absence of animals, the grazing is simulated by selective mowing.

Spring meadows are very suitable for small meadow areas and those which are in semi-shade for part of the year.

The selected bulbs and plant species should be sown in autumn so that they grow up in the early part of the year and flower between March to June / early July. The spring meadow should be cut in July and again in October. Trampling or walking a spring meadow after cutting will help with the dispersal of seeds.

Bugle: *Adjugata reptans*  
Cowslips: *Primula vulgaris*  
Creeping speedwell: *Veronica filiformis*  
Daisy: *Bellis perennis*  
Dandelion: *Taraxacum officinale*  
Germander speedwell: *Veronica chamaedrys*  
Lady's smock (Cuckoo flower): *Cardamine pratensis*  
Lesser stitchwort: *Stellaria graminea*  
Meadow saxifrage: *Saxifraga granulata*  
Self heal: *Prunella vulgaris*  
Snakeshead fritillary: *Fritillaria meleagris*  
Wild daffodil: *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*  
Yellow rattle: *Rhinanthus minor*

**Summer meadow:** the seeds or plants for a summer meadow should be sown in March / April and then grow up through May to flower between May and September. The meadow should be cut and raked off in late August / September and can then be high mown through to early March if required.

Autumn hawkbit: *Leontoda autumnalis*  
Bladder campion: *Silene vulgaris*  
Betony: *Stachys officinalis*  
Common Birds Foot Trefoil: *Lotus cornicularis*  
Common knapweed: *Centaurea nigra*  
Devils Bit Scabious: *Succisa pratensis*  
Field Scabious: *Knautia arvensis*  
Greater Birds Foot Trefoil: *Lotus pedunculata*  
Greater knapweed: *Centaurea scabiosa*  
Harebell: *Campanula rotundifolia*  
Kidney vetch: *Anthyllis vulneraria*  
Ladys Bedstraw: *Gallium versum*  
Marjoram: *Origanum vulgare*  
Meadow buttercup: *Ranunculus acris*  
Meadow cranesbill: *Geranium pratense*  
Musk mallow: *Malva moschata*  
Ox eye daisy: *Leucantheum vulgare*  
Pignut: *Conopodium majus*  
Red clover: *Trifolium pratense*  
Wild carrot: *Daucus carota*  
Yarrow: *Achillea millefolium*  
Yellow rattle: *Rhinanthus minor*

**Combined Meadow:** There is no reason why the spring and summer meadow species cannot be combined. However, a combined meadow will not be cut until September and raked off; this will be the only cut.

**Damp Summer Meadow :** all the species listed below require a sunny aspect with permanently damp ground, though not necessarily, marsh. They are “combination” meadows in that they contain a mix of spring and summer flowering species. They should therefore not be cut until flowering stops in September.

Agrimony: *Agrimonia eupatoria*  
Devils Bit Scabious: *Succisa pratensis*  
Ladys smock: *Cardamine pratensis*  
King Cup: (Marsh marigold): *Caltha palustris*  
Marsh Woundwort: *Stachys palustris*  
Meadow buttercup: *Ranunculus acris*  
Meadowsweet: *Filipendula ulmaria*  
Purple Loosestrife: *Lythrum salicaria*  
Ragged robin: *Lychnis flos-calculi*  
Salad burnet: *Sanguisorba minor*  
Water avens: *Geum rivale*  
Water mint: *Mentha aquatica*  
Yellow Flag Iris: *Iris pseudacorus*

### **Resources:**

**The first four references have plenty of information on the creation of meadows, including site preparation, planting and management.**

1. Steel.J. “Meadows and Cornfields”, Webbs Barn Designs. 2001 ISBN 0-9541116-0-5  
[www.webbsbarn.co.uk](http://www.webbsbarn.co.uk) [www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk](http://www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk)
2. Landlife, “How to Make Wildflower Habitat Gardens” Landlife.2000  
ISBN 0-9523472-2-9 Telephone: 0151 737 181, email: [info@landlife.org.uk](mailto:info@landlife.org.uk)  
[www.landlife.org.uk](http://www.landlife.org.uk)
3. Briggs.J. “Creating Small Habitats for Wildlife in your Garden, Guild of Master Craftsman Publications Ltd. ISBN 1-86108-188-X GMC publications: 01273 488005  
[pubs@thegmcgroup.com](mailto:pubs@thegmcgroup.com)
4. The Royal Horticultural Society website: [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk) Go to: gardening advice – wildflower meadows. This web-site is, in turn, linked to other useful sites. You do not have to be a Member to access the material.

**The following three resources are suppliers of grasses, flowering plants, bulbs and cornfield annuals.**

5. Somerset Wildflowers, Helen Boyer: 01963 350418 [www.somersetwildflowers.co.uk](http://www.somersetwildflowers.co.uk)  
e-mail: [boyer@orchard-farm.co.uk](mailto:boyer@orchard-farm.co.uk)

6. Shipton Bulbs: Y Felin, Henllan, Amgoed, Whitland, Carmarthenshire, SA34 0SL  
Telephone: 01994 240125 [www.bluebellbulbs.co.uk](http://www.bluebellbulbs.co.uk) e-mail: [bluebell@zoo.co.uk](mailto:bluebell@zoo.co.uk)
7. Natural Surroundings: This company tells you how to calculate the weight of seed you may require for your chosen area; gives tips on soil preparation; and sells grass seed species and wildflower mixes according to soil type [www.naturalsurroundings.org.uk](http://www.naturalsurroundings.org.uk)