

# Site Management

## Watering

Unless you are experiencing drought conditions, it's not necessary to water your seedbed. If there is not enough rainfall following seed germination, you may need to water your site to ensure seed survival. Once established, native plants do not need to be watered, overwatering will favor the growth of weed species.

## Wildflower Mix Management

### First Growing Season:

The best way to control weed species during the first growing season is by regularly mowing or string trimming the seedbed. Plan on mowing every time the vegetation reaches 12 inches in height down to 5-8 inches or when a large number of weeds begin to flower. This will prevent weeds from re-seeding, while leaving your wildflowers alone. **Weeds should not be pulled the first year as the surrounding seedlings are still developing their root systems.**

### Second Growing Season:

In early spring, mow or rake away the previous season's debris. Most remaining weeds will be biennial species, which can be controlled by mowing. However, rather than mowing the entire site, spot mow weeds with a string trimmer, hand weeding, or spray right before weeds are about to flower.

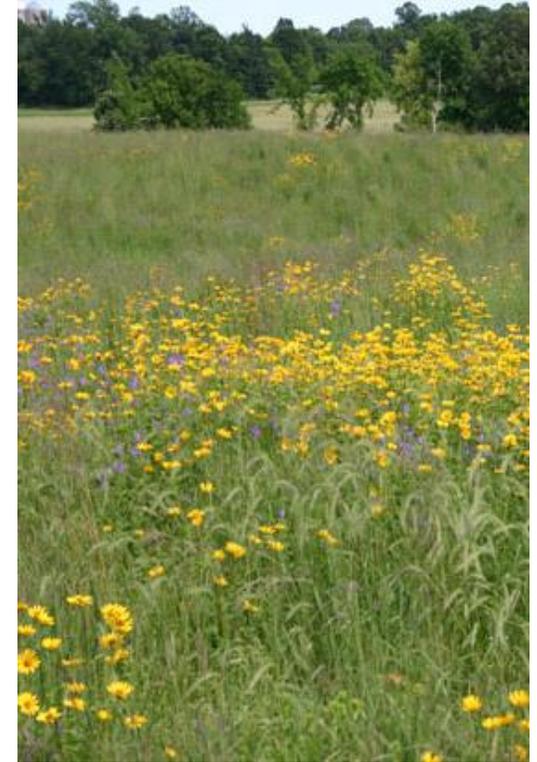
Ideal Planting Dates by Vegetation Type

Seed Type	Spring/Early Summer	Early Fall	Late Fall (Dormant Seeding)	Snow Seeding	Key
Cool-Season Prairie	April 1 <sup>st</sup> – June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Frozen Soil	Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> – April 7 <sup>th</sup>	High Success
Warm-Season Prairie	May 15 <sup>th</sup> – June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Frozen Soil	Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> – April 7 <sup>th</sup>	Medium Success
Prairie Sedges & Forbs	May 15 <sup>th</sup> – June 30 <sup>th</sup>	Aug. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup> – Frozen Soil	Feb. 15 <sup>th</sup> – April 7 <sup>th</sup>	Low Success

Source(s):

*Establishing Pollinator Meadows from Seed.*  
The Xerces Society.

*Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines.* Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources.



# NATIVE SEED MIX PLANTING GUIDE

*Establishing Native Grasses & Wildflowers from Seed in an Urban Setting*

## Site Selection

### Site Selection Tips

- Most native wildflowers need full sunlight to thrive – choose an open site that gets full sun for a majority of the day.
- Level ground works best, but sloped sites are fine as long as erosion is controlled during establishment.
- Keep weeds in mind – if there are aggressive weed species nearby they may disperse easily into your wildflower area if not controlled frequently.



*Pictured: Prairie seeded with wildflower species – located in Blue Earth County, MN. Prairie was planted through the Reinvest in Minnesota Easement Program.*

## Site Preparation

### Site Preparation Essentials

Site Preparation is extremely important in order to have successful establishment.

Prior to planting you will need to:

- Eliminate existing vegetation,
- Reduce weed seed in the soil,
- Remove plant debris,
- and create a smooth surface to ensure good seed to soil contact.

Eliminating existing vegetation and weed control during site preparation will require the use of broad-spectrum herbicides, solarization, sod removal, or a combination of these methods.

**After using sod removal, solarization, or herbicide treatments, avoid any tillage as cultivation will likely bring weed seed to the soil surface.**

### Seedbed Preparation

After existing vegetation has been removed, the soil surface must be prepared prior to planting. A smooth, lightly packed surface, free of clumped sod is ideal. On small sites – a rake or turf roller can be used to break up large dirt clumps. If you treat the site with glyphosate, allow at least 72 hours before planting your site.

## Planting Techniques

### Timing

For wildflowers in Minnesota, early fall planting is best for perennial species in cold climates. Spring planting is also possible, however it can favor grass species rather than the wildflowers that you may want.



*Pictured: Common Ox-Eye*

### Seeding Methods

Broadcast seeding is a low-tech, low-cost method that can be very effective. To have the best seeding success, mix the seed with an equal or greater volume of slightly damp material such as coarse-textured sand or sawdust. The material will help the seeds distribute more evenly.

Broadcast half of your seed to your planting area in one direction. Then, spread the second half in a direction perpendicular to the initial pass. To achieve good seed to soil contact, a standard lawn roller can be used.