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: *Koelaria macrantha*
- Meadow fescue: *Festuca pratensis*
- Meadow barley: *Hordeum secalinum*
- Quaking grass: *Briza media*
- Red fescue: *Festuca rubra*
- Sheeps fescue: *Festuca ovira*
- Smooth meadow grass: *Poa pratensis*
- Sweet vernal grass: *Anthoxanthrum 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 camomile: *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: *Adjuga reptans*
Cowslips: *Primula vulgaris*
Creeping speedwell: *Veronica filiforma*
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 than 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*
Lady’s Bedstraw: *Gallium versum*
Marjoram: *Origanum vulgare*
Meadow buttercup: *Ranunculus acris*
Meadow cranesbill: *Geranium pratense*
Musk mallow: *Malva moschata*
Ox eye daisy: *Leucanthemum 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.

   www.webbsbarn.co.uk  www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk

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   www.landlife.org.uk

   Craftsman Publications Ltd. ISBN 1-86108-188-X  GMC publications: 01273 488005
   pubs@thegmcgroup.com

4. The Royal Horticultural Society website:  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
   e-mail: boyer@orchard-farm.co.uk
6. Shipton Bulbs: Y Felin, Henllan, Amgoed, Whitland, Carmarthenshire, SA34 0SL
   Telephone: 01994 240125  www.bluebellbulbs.co.uk e-mail: 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