

Wildflower Seeds

Planting wildflower seeds is easy to do. Wildflowers are natural and beautiful in your flower garden or anywhere on your property.

Wildflowers are very hardy when growing in their native region. That is because they are already naturally adapted to the soil types and temperatures from that area. Additionally, they also naturally resist insects and disease that are prevalent to the area.

Planting Wildflower Seeds:

There are some neat advantages to starting your wildflower gardens from seed.

- * Economics – it's less expensive to harvest your own seeds.
- * Self-Fulfillment – The enjoyment & satisfaction.
- * Re-creating your Favorites – This is a good way to ensure certain beautiful flowers can be continued.

Some wildflower seeds are difficult to save while others are difficult to germinate. The good news however, is that most wildflower seeds are hardy and easy to germinate.

You have 2 basic options when planting wildflower seeds:

- 1) They can be purchased from a seed company or local store, or
- 2) They can be your very own collected from your garden. Both options are a great way to start your flower gardens from seeds.

If you purchase your wildflower seeds, follow the directions on the back of the seed packs for guidance. The companies that are marketing these have spent a lot of time & money researching the best way for that particular set of seeds to grow and thrive. The information provided below will still benefit you because there are instructions on proper sowing techniques.

Harvesting & planting wildflower seeds collected from your own wildflower garden is easy when you know how. Following is information on how to properly collect, store, & sow your own wildflower seeds.

Harvesting/Collecting Wildflower Seeds:

Properly harvesting your wildflower seeds is an important step in the collection process. Here are some tips to consider:

- * The wildflowers need to be completely mature to harvest the best seeds.
- * Wildflower blooms need to be allowed to fade.
- * Choose the most beautiful wildflowers for saving seed.
- * Label your wildflower seeds – many seeds look alike the next growing season so you'll be glad you did this.

Note: Once the petals have dried on the wildflower & the seed is fully ripened, you can cut the wildflower heads & allow them to finish drying inside your home or garage.

Storing Wildflower Seeds:

Storing your wildflower seeds is a next important step after you have collected and properly prepared them. A few of the basics on pre-storage steps are:

- Allow the wildflowers to become fully mature.
- Choose the best examples from petals that are fully ripe.
- Cut the wildflowers heads and allow them to finish drying.

Once collected, there are a few important steps required to ensure success at storing your wildflower seeds. First, here are some “info-facts” on seed storage:

- * Seed moisture and storage temperature are the most important factors in determining how long your seed can be stored. The drier your seeds are, the longer they will store.
- * Wildflower seeds can be kept for 1 year without major decrease in germination.
- * Under the proper conditions, seed storage can be extended for 10 years or more.

A Wildflower Gardens Success – will depend partly on the quality of seeds planted. The actual way you store seeds will determine the germination success ratio. You can achieve up to a 10 year storage life by doing the following:

Dry the collected wildflower seed to less than 8 percent moisture. This is done by drying the seed for 6 hours at 100 degrees F.

Method 1:

- * Spread your seed out in direct sunlight. Note: drying in the shade is better because the direct sun can be harsh and exceed your 100 degree temperature.

Method 2:

- * You can use a conventional oven. CAUTION! Do not use a microwave oven! When using an oven, keep the door so that you can keep the temperatures around 100 degrees F.

Package:

- * Put the seed into a moisture proof container. Moisture proof means you can submerge the container without the contents getting wet and can include jars or cans (for longer storage periods it is best not to use plastic bags).
- * Store it in a refrigerator.

Sowing Your Wildflower Seeds:

Planting wildflower seeds is as easy as following a recipe book. To make planting your seeds consistent over the entire area you should add a bulking material such as sand or sawdust to your seeds. Ratios can vary depending on the bulk and your own feel but use approximately a 6 to 1 ratio (6 parts bulk to 1 part wildflower seeds).

To get best results it is important that your seeds have good soil contact. There is a balance between the seeds being deep enough and being too deep:

- * Too Deep: If too deep the seeds may run out of their inner nutrition source before making it to the surface.
- * Not Deep Enough: If not deep enough, the elements can get to them in the form of wind, hard rain, or creatures such as birds feeding upon them.
- * Just the Right Depth: If wildflower seeds are planted at just the right depth (just under the surface) they are protected from the elements and at the same time shallow enough to break through to the surface before their reserves run out.

Seed Tip: Apply straw as a cover to prevent erosion on hillsides or as extra protection from the elements.

Fertilizers are not usually necessary for wildflowers if proper pre-planning has taken place. By choosing a site that is well suited for your wildflowers, as well as choosing wildflowers native to the area you live, the flowers are already adapted to growing well without fertilizer help.

Tips:

- * Consider germination soil mix & propagation kits.
- * Can use nursery containers of various sizes.
- * Can use about any type of containers just make sure they are washed with soap & bleach to clean them thoroughly.
- * Make sure the containers chosen have holes in the bottom for adequate draining.
- * Sow your wildflower seeds in a good seed-starting mix consisting of peat moss, perlite & vermiculite.
- * Moisten this mix before sowing the seed, not too wet however.
- * Don't bury the seed too deeply. A general rule is to set the seed about as deep as the seed is large.
- * This gets tricky with very small seed because they barely need to be covered (just lightly pressing the seed into the mix is good).

Germination of Your Wildflower Seeds:

This is where the proof is: How good were your wildflower seeds? How well were they stored. Did you sow them properly? It is a good idea to test your seed for germination before planting them.

To do this:

Choose 10 seeds at random.

Place them in a damp paper towel.

Put the seeds inside a plastic bag

Leave them in a warm place for about a week.

* After 1 week unroll the paper towel and count the number of seeds that are sprouting.

This will give you a good idea of percentage of your flower seeds that will sprout when planted. By knowing this you know how much extra to plant in order to achieve desired growth.

Good luck... You are going to have a lot of fun collecting and planting your own wildflower seeds.