Follow these 12 steps to establish a small landscape planting of native wildflowers:

1. **Location, Location, Location**
   Choose a site that is sunny most of the day, has well-drained soil, and is free of weeds.

2. **Determine Suitable Wildflower Species**
   Pictures and descriptions of wildflowers that are adapted to your area of Florida are listed at the Florida Wildflower Seed and Plant Growers Cooperative website, www.FloridaWildflowers.com. Common wildflowers are generally adaptable to a range of gardening conditions and are generally listed as suitable for North, Central or South Florida where they will thrive naturally in nature. Seeds can be purchased in small individual packets or as garden mixtures.

3. **Determine When to Sow Seeds**
   Sow seed from
   - mid-September to mid-October in North Florida
   - mid-October to end of December in Central Florida
   - November through January in South Florida
   Planting can be extended to mid-April by using irrigation. Planting during hot months should be avoided, because the soil’s surface dries out too quickly.

4. **For Areas with Turfgrass**
   While some gardeners prefer to chemically eradicate weeds with glyphosate, the Foundation recommends soil solarization as the best means of obtaining a weed-free planting site. This process takes time and patience, and must be done from June to mid-August. First, remove existing turf and weeds with a shovel. Then till the soil 12 to 18 inches deep, breaking up soil clods (the finer the soil texture, the better). Remove sticks, roots and other debris brought up by tilling. Rake the surface of the area until smooth, then water until slightly moist but not soggy. Cover with clear plastic that is 3–6 mil thick. (1mil is equal to .001 or 1/1000 inch.) To prevent wind from lifting the sheet, bury its edges in up to 12 inches of soil. Solarization takes about six weeks. Leave the plastic in place until the seed is sown.

5. **For Areas with Bare Soil**
   Scratch or firm up soil. For sites with bare soil, soil-to-seed contact is critical, so one day before seeding, or just prior to seeding, lightly scratch firmer soils with a rake. Sandy soils might have to be made more firm by rolling to ensure that seeds do not sink too deep.
6. **Sow Seeds**
   This method distributes seeds evenly over the garden:
   • Fill a large bucket about halfway with sand or vermiculite; slightly moisten the sand or vermiculite.
   • Add $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total seeds and mix thoroughly.
   • Starting at one end of the garden, spread the mixture evenly over the site.
   • Repeat the above steps with the other $\frac{1}{2}$ of the seeds but start spreading them from the opposite end of the plot.

7. **Place Seeds in Contact with Soil**
   Walk over the site to ensure good seed to soil contact. If the area is larger, consider renting a sod roller. Seeds should remain on top of the soil or be covered $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch at most. Generally, the smaller the seed, the more shallowly it needs to be planted. Most seeds need light to germinate!
   Water seeds gently after planting to help settle them in the soil, then wait until spring for further irrigation if rain is not sufficient for growth.

8. **Be Patient!**
   Though some species will germinate quickly, others may need to rest in the soil for 3 to 4 months. In that time they will naturally receive water and fluctuating temperatures that will stimulate their emergence at the right time in early spring.

9. **Irrigate**
   Keep the planting site moist, but not wet. For loamy soils, that might mean watering 2 to 4 times per week with about $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inches of water; sandy soils might need daily watering. Monitor the soil for moisture and adjust watering accordingly. After wildflowers germinate, irrigate with about $\frac{1}{2}$-inch of water only if they show signs of drought stress.

10. **Keep Out the Weeds**
    To minimize weed interference, remove by hand seedlings of grass or non-wildflowers after wildflowers have emerged and been identified. To help identify your young wildflowers, photos of young plants showing leaf shape and arrangement can be found on the Florida Wildflower Foundation website at http://goo.gl/IXEXYX.

11. **Do Not Fertilize**
    Many of Florida’s native wildflower species are adapted to and perform well in soils with low fertility. Excess fertilization will promote vegetative growth over flowering, might make wildflowers more susceptible to insect and disease pests, and will promote weed growth. If plants appear nutritionally deficient in the growing season, a light layer of compost or several applications of a half-strength liquid fertilizer can be applied to correct the problem.

12. **Wait Until Seeds Have Matured**
    Your wildflowers will reseed themselves if given the opportunity, so wait until seeds have matured before deadheading or mowing. For many species, seeds need 2 to 4 weeks to mature after plants bloom. Seeds can be dried, stored in plastic bags at 40F, and replanted in the fall in your garden.

The use of trade names in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. The Florida Wildflower Foundation does not guarantee or warranty the products named, and reference to them in this publication does not signify our approval to the exclusion of other products of suitable composition. All chemicals should be used in accordance with directions on the manufacturer’s label. Use pesticides safely. Read and follow directions on the manufacturer’s label.