



FLORIDA
WILDFLOWER
FOUNDATION

Establishing a small planting of native wildflowers from seed

Florida's wildflowers

- Provide habitat for bees responsible for every third bite of food we eat
- Curb water use in landscapes
- Reduce water and air pollution
- Beautify communities and roadsides
- Contribute to a sense of place that is uniquely La Florida

What you can do

- Landscape with Florida native wildflowers and plants
- Stop using pesticides, which harm bees and other beneficial insects
- Stop using fertilizer, which harms waterways and lake
- Ask your county to preserve roadside wildflowers
- Work with lawmakers to preserve and conserve natural resources and lands

Resources

www.FlaWildflowers.org
www.PlantRealFlorida.org
www.FloridaWildflowers.com
www.FNPS.org



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 Seed

Sow seed in

- mid-September to mid-October in north Florida
- mid-October to end of November in central Florida
- November to early-January in south Florida

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 12-18 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 (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 day 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, firmer soils will have to be lightly scratched with a rake. Sandy soils might have to be made more firm by rolling to ensure that seed do not sink too deep.



Pick a State Wildflower

The State Wildflower license plate preserves and conserves Florida's natural heritage by funding native wildflower grant projects, roadside plantings and research at state universities. Choose the plate that gives back to natural, native Florida!

6. Sow Seed

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 1/2 of the total seed and mix thoroughly.
- Starting at one end of the garden, spread the mixture evenly over the site.
- Repeat the above steps with the other 1/2 of the seed but start spreading seed from the opposite end of the plot.

7. Place Seed in Contact with Soil

Walk over the entire site to ensure good soil-to-seed contact. Seed should remain on top of the soil or be covered 1/8 inch deep to 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 seeds in soil, then wait until spring for further irrigation if rain is not sufficient for growth.

8. Be Patient!

Seeds need to rest in the soil 3-4 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

In early spring (February-March) irrigate the site with about 1/4 to 1/2 inch of water 2-3 times per week for about 2 to 3 weeks to speed up germination. After that, irrigate with about 1/2 inch water only if the wildflowers show signs of drought stress.

10. Keep Out the Weeds

To minimize weed interference hand weed seedlings of grass or non-wildflowers after wildflowers have emerged and been identified. To help identify your young wildflowers, photos of small wildflower plants showing leaf shape and arrangement can be found on the Florida Wildflower Foundation website at www.Floridawildflowerfoundation.org/resources/pdfs/pdf10/SeedlingImageProject_Report-Ver2007-96DPI_Images.pdf.

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 seed 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.



Purchase Florida native wildflower seeds and seed mixes through our store at www.flawildflowers.org/shop.php.

