

# Useful Things

## *Finding and buying the right seed mix*

It is important that you buy the right seeds for your meadow or pollinator habitat, to increase the likelihood that it will be successful. This means buying the right seeds for the soil and climate type, and by ensuring that they are from as local a source as possible.

For example, for dry, well-drained soil, look for seed mixes with Campions, Vetches, and coastal plants. For damp, shady areas, look for seed mixes with plants like Meadowsweet, Marsh thistle and Yellow flag iris.

In Scotland, Scotia Seeds do a great selection of seed mixes for all kinds of soil and climate type. They grow their own seed on their farm in Angus, so you can be sure that they should do well in Scotland. They supply a range of quantities, from small packets covering 1 – 2 m<sup>2</sup>, up to 1 kg for sowing large meadows. They also provide single species seed packets, in case you want to do some small-scale enhancements. All the information you need can be found here: [www.scotiaseeds.co.uk](http://www.scotiaseeds.co.uk)

There are other wildflower seed suppliers out there, both online, and in the shops. When buying seeds from anywhere, it is important to check where the seeds were grown and harvested. Whilst it is good to select native species whenever you can, it is actually more important to ensure that the provenance of the seed is British. This means that the seed was originally sourced from UK native stock, and has subsequently been grown and harvested in the UK. This will make sure that the seeds are suited to the UK soils and climate conditions, and also that they won't accidentally import any pest, diseases or invasive species when you plant them.

It is possible to buy wildflower seeds most of the time throughout the year (there are some exceptions, when new seed needs to be harvested). However, be aware that the best times of year to sow the seeds are in autumn or early spring. If you sow seeds in summer, they will be able to germinate, but are unlikely to be able to flower, be pollinated and set seed before the season is over. Therefore, they will not produce new seeds for next year and you will have a much lower species diversity in year 2. Sowing in autumn allows the seeds to germinate as soon as the weather allows. Sowing in early spring usually works too, though you will have to wait until the soil is warm enough to rake over, so seeds will germinate a little later than autumn sown seeds.

## *Finding and buying the right plug plants*

Plug plants are a great way to improve an existing grassland or wildflower area, as you are able to select the specific species you want, and can target particular areas of the site. They are more expensive than seeds, but you are planting fully-grown plants, which will have an immediate impact on the meadow. If you are planting annual plug plants, there should be sufficient time for them to flower and set seed in the same year as planting. You can usually buy plug plants from spring right through to autumn, though you should only buy perennial plants later in the year.

As with buying seeds, it is important to make sure that the plugs have a local provenance, or, are at least grown in a part of the UK that has a similar climate to the one you will be planting them in. Most suppliers will provide single plant tray (in batches of 25, 50 or 100), or habitat mixes, where you get a selection of plants suitable for the conditions you want. The suppliers will put together a mix of the plants they have available for those conditions, so if you have specific species requirements, it is better to buy them individually, or speak to the suppliers directly.



Suggested wildflower plug plant suppliers for central Scotland are:

**Alba Trees** – supplies trees, shrubs, and plants that are grown at their nurseries in East Lothian. They have fewer species of wildflowers than some other suppliers, but you are guaranteed Scottish provenance. <http://www.albatrees.co.uk/>

**Craigmarloch nurseries** – trade nursery and garden centre based in North Lanarkshire selling a wide range of commercially grown plants at several sites. <https://www.craigmarloch.co.uk/>

**Cumbria Wildflowers** – supplies a large range of wildflower plants, and bulbs that are all sourced for original UK stock and grown at their nursery near Carlisle. They also supply a range of plug plant sizes, from 4cm to 7cm pots. <https://www.cumbriawildflowers.co.uk/>

**Pentland Plants** – nursery and garden centre south of Edinburgh supplying both native wildflowers, ornamental species of plants. <http://www.pentlandplants.co.uk/home.asp>

**Watch Us Grow** - organic garden and plant sales, based at Palacerigg Country Park in North Lanarkshire. They are a not-for-profit organisation providing opportunities for adults with special needs, growing and selling plants directly from the garden or at local plant sales to help raise funds for the charity. <https://watchusgrow.org.uk/our-garden/>

**Wildlife & Countryside Services** – suppliers of seeds, plug plants and bulbs from their nursery in North Wales. <http://www.wildlifeservices.co.uk/plants.html>

**Woodside Cottage Herbs** – small nursery in North Lanarkshire growing speciality herb, wildflower and shrubs. [www.herbscents.co.uk](http://www.herbscents.co.uk)



Grangepans wildflower meadow. ©Buglife

