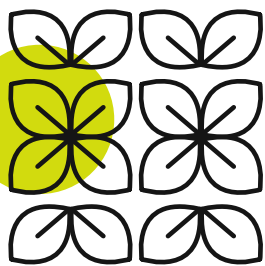




Pearson



Ask the Expert

How can schools increase their biodiversity with wildflowers?



Growing wildflowers from seeds is a great way to increase biodiversity and bring colour and interest to your school grounds. Taking your learning outside is good for your learners, and connecting your learners to nature is good for the planet. Whether it's a field-sized meadow, flower-bed or container, making room for wildflowers will make a difference to local pollinators and provide a rich environment for nature connection, learning and creativity.



Sam Kendall

Head of School Learning – Eden Project

1. When to plant wildflowers

Sow wildflower seeds in bare soil in autumn for flowers early the following summer. Late September/October is the perfect time as this is when wildflower seeds would naturally drop, so your seeds will be in tune with their natural cycle and nature will water them for you. Alternatively sow your seeds in spring (after the last frost and before the end of May) for summer flowers. It'll take 60-80 days for spring-sown seeds to flower, so factor in the summer holidays if you want to enjoy your flowers blooming.

[For more tips on how to grow wildflowers visit our webpage.](#)

2. Grow sustainably

Make your wildflower project exemplify sustainability in action. Use recycled and repurposed planters and peat-free compost. Involve the children in making decisions about what and how to plant. Every decision is an opportunity to develop sustainable thinking skills. Try using the [Development Compass Rose](#) that helps to focus questions around Natural, Social, Economic and Political.

3. Use wildflowers to create opportunities for nature care and connection

Sir David Attenborough explains it perfectly (of course) “No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced.” The decline in annual wildflowers due to changes in agriculture and pressure from development has had serious consequences for wildlife as wildflowers provide food for a range of insects including bees and butterflies. Planting wildflowers is a practical and tangible opportunity for young people to see themselves as part of the solution which is an important step in countering the anxiety that many of them feel about our environment.

4. Treat outdoor learning as a must-have, not a nice to have

Your outdoor space is a free asset that you can use to enhance learning – a growing body of evidence shows the positive impact of learning outdoors on learning, social skills and health. Use your wildflower project to stimulate outdoor learning across the curriculum so that all children and young people can benefit. Many schools are starting by challenging themselves to take each class outside for at least one lesson (in addition to PE) a week.

5. Think Curriculum, Campus and Community – sustainable schools do all 3

You've beautified your grounds, you've taken advantage of related learning opportunities – could wildflowers also be a way to engage with (and beautify) your wider community? From hedges, fields, and woodlands to roundabouts, housing estates, churchyards and cemeteries, we want everyone to experience the glory of wildflowers.

Get inspired by our [National Wildflower Centre](#).

