



# Wildflower Project

March 2025

# The Problem



## Invasive Species

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) such as Himalayan balsam, laurel, and rhododendron have out-competed and **decimated the natural vegetation across all our nature spaces in Woking.**

## Lack of natural regeneration

The seedbank for natural regeneration is now too low to re populate areas with wildflowers. This means **wildflowers will not return unless we help them.**



## Degradation of riparian health

A lack of natural vegetation binding together the soil of our riverbanks, leads to collapse of riverbanks. **The increase in suspended solids in our streams is having a devastating effect on our invertebrates and fish.**

# The Solution

- WEAct has sourced native wildflower seeds that are optimal for each of Woking's natural spaces:
  - *White Rose Lane & Mayford Meadows* – Riverbank species that thrive in wet conditions.
  - *Millmoor Common* – Meadow species that will outcompete the grass.
  - *St John's* – Woodland species that thrive in dark areas.
- Once INNS are removed, and ground is prepared, wildflower seeds will be sown in their place. If maintained properly, the hope is some of the wildflowers will out compete the returning INNS.
- The wildflower mixes have been specifically chosen to provide habitat and food for our pollinators, but they will also eventually put on a fantastic display when flowering, so local communities will also enjoy the diversity of colours.

# Our approach

- Rather than attempting to cover a large area in wildflower, we will use small pilot plots to test our approach, and to learn what works and what doesn't. We will then iterate our approach to scale up what worked well.
- Initially, 25m<sup>2</sup> pilot sites would be selected according to suitability and likelihood of wildflower establishing. Areas will be located using what3words, to allow easy identification.
- Specific areas will allow us to measure the impact of sowing wildflower seeds, compared with areas that are only cleared of INNS.
- Small, pilot areas will also allow us to regularly return to the pilot sites to remove any regrown INNS, to give the wildflowers the best possible chance of surviving to flowering.
- Progress will be monitored regularly, by taking photos from the same position to offer comparable photos



# Species mix that we will plant



All our seeds were purchased from [Bostonseeds.com](https://www.bostonseeds.com).

**BS1P General Purpose** contains 22 native British wildflower species, consisting of mainly perennial species and a handful of annual and biennial species to create a permanent area of pure wildflowers. The species included in this mixture create an attractive display from May to October and is suitable for creating habitats across a diverse range of soil types. It is ideal for use in areas containing a range of micro-climates or where there are no conditions to overcome.

**BS6P Wetland & Pond Edge** contains 22 native British wildflower species, consisting of perennial and biennial species to create a permanent area of pure wildflowers. The species included in this mixture create an attractive display from May to October and is suitable for creating habitats in alongside streams, ponds and rivers. It is also great in damp locations and wet low-lying land.

**BSXP Dual Purpose** contains 27 native British wildflower species, consisting of 70% perennial species and 30% annual and biennial species to create a permanent area of pure wildflowers. The species included in this mixture create an attractive display from May to October and is suitable for a wide range of soil types and environments. The large percentage of annuals in this mixture make it ideal for situations where first year colour is important.

**BS8P Woodland & Heavy Shade** contains 24 native British wildflower species, consisting of mainly perennial species to create a permanent area of pure wildflowers. The species included in this mixture create an attractive display from May to October and is suitable for creating habitats in wooded areas. It is ideal for use in situations where shade may be heavy or prolonged.

# Site selection

Seeds were shared between our sites, based on the attributes of each place, e.g. wetland seeds along riverbanks of Mayford Meadows and White Rose Lane.

|            | Number of pilot plots per site |                 |                 |               |                 |
|------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Seed Mixes |                                | White Rose Lane | Millmoor Common | St John's Lye | Mayford Meadows |
|            | Woodland & Heavy Shade BS8P    | 2               | 1               | 2             | 1               |
|            | Wetland & Pond Edge BS6P       | 3               | 1               | -             | 2               |
|            | General Purpose BS1P           | -               | 2               | 1             | -               |
|            | Dual Purpose BSX               | -               | 1               | 2             | -               |

# Site location what3words

## **White Rose Lane**

### **Woodland:**

1. count.tulip.slave
2. remain.bugs.towers

### **Wetland:**

1. cares.issued.monday
2. museum.frosted.high
3. Teeth.react.pencil

## **Millmoor Common**

### **Woodland:**

1. TBC

### **Wetland:**

1. TBC

### **General Purpose:**

1. TBC

### **Dual:**

1. TBC

## **St John's Lye**

### **Woodland:**

1. TBC
2. TBC

### **General Purpose:**

1. TBC

### **Dual:**

1. TBC
2. TBC

## **Mayford Meadows**

### **Woodland:**

1. TBC

### **Wetland:**

1. TBC
2. TBC

# Site preparation

Wildflowers grow best in carefully prepared soil. Follow these steps to give them the best chance to thrive!

## 1. Clear the Area

*Goal: Remove any large weeds, rubbish, or grass that isn't suitable for wildflowers.*

What to do: Use a spade or hoe to dig up unwanted plants and weeds. Pull out roots where possible. Remove any large stones, wood, plastic, or other debris.

Tools: spade, garden hoe, rake, bags for waste

## 2. Reduce Soil Nutrients (if needed)

*Goal: Wildflowers prefer low-fertility soil. Rich soils encourage weeds and grasses that outcompete wildflowers.*

What to do: If the soil looks dark, rich, and full of worms or strong grass growth, you might need to remove the top 5–10cm of soil. You can sow directly into the subsoil underneath.

Tools: spade, wheelbarrow to carry soil away

## 3. Cultivate the Soil

*Goal: Break up the soil and relieve compaction so roots can grow.*

What to do: Dig or rotavate the soil to a depth of about 10cm, breaking up big clumps. Remove stones and roots as you go.

Tools: garden fork, rake

## 4. Create a Fine, Level Seedbed

*Goal: Make the surface even and smooth so seeds can settle and grow evenly.*

What to do: Rake the area to create a fine, crumbly surface (called a "tilth"). Lightly tread the area with your boots or use a roller to gently firm it. The ground should be firm enough to walk on without leaving deep footprints.

Tools: Rake, Your boots (for treading)

## 6. Overseeding Grassland (if not bare soil)

*Goal: Prepare existing grass for wildflower seeds.*

Only do this if: The grass is short, sparse, and contains only fine-leaved grasses (not ryegrass or weedy species).

What to do: Cut grass as short as possible (use a mower or shears). Scarify or rake the ground thoroughly to expose soil beneath and remove moss/thatch.

Tools: Lawn mower or shears, rake or scarifier

## Final Check Before Sowing Seeds:

- ✓ The ground is fine, level, and not too soft.
- ✓ Weeds are under control.
- ✓ There is exposed soil (not thick grass).
- ✓ The site is clear of debris.

You're now ready to sow wildflower seeds!



# Sowing

Once the ground is prepared, it's time to sow the seeds! Follow these steps to give your wildflowers the best chance to grow and flourish.

## 1. Choose the Right Time

*Goal: Sow seeds when conditions are best for germination.*

Best times to sow: Spring or Autumn. Avoid very hot or dry periods.

If sowing into grass (overseeding), autumn is best—grass grows more slowly, giving wildflowers a better start.

## 2. Spread the Seeds Evenly

*Goal: Cover the area with seed at the correct rate—no more, no less.*

What to do: Spread the mix by hand.

Spread at 3 grams of seed per square metre.

Walk across the area in one direction, then again at right angles.

Keep mixing the seed while you sow—smaller seeds can sink to the bottom.

Tools: hands, bucket for the seed mix

## 3. Ensure Good 'Seed to Soil' Contact

*Goal: Help the seeds settle into the soil so they can germinate.*

What to do: After sowing, gently rake the soil surface to lightly mix the seeds in—no deeper than 0.5cm.

Alternatively (or additionally), lightly roll or tread the ground to press the seeds into the soil.

Seeds should not be buried deeper than 0.7cm—they need light to germinate!

Tools: Garden rake, your boots for treading

## Final Check After Sowing:

- ✓ Seeds are evenly spread—no clumps or missed patches.
- ✓ Seed to soil contact has been made (but not buried too deep).
- ✓ Area looks tidy, firm, and ready for nature to do its work.

Now just add time, sun, and rain—and nature will take it from here.

# Maintenance

- **Woodland & Heavy Shade BS8P** contains mainly perennial species, which can be slow to establish and are unlikely to flower in the first year.
- **Wetland & Pond Edge BS6P** contains perennial species, which can be slow to establish and are unlikely to flower in the first year.
- **General Purpose BS1P** contains mainly perennial species, which can be slow to establish and are unlikely to flower in the first year. Annual species such as Black Medic, Forget-Me-Not and Night Flowering Catchfly will generally flower in year one.
- **Dual Purpose BSXP** contains many perennial species, which can be slow to establish and are unlikely to flower in the first year. However the 30% of annual species (Cornflower, corn camomile, corn marigold, field poppy forget-me-not and black medick) will generally, flower in year one.

## First Year

1. During the first year remove any weeds which grow before they run to seed, either by topping, mowing or by hand for smaller areas. Weed growth is common due to the action of disturbing the ground (rather than being caused by contaminated seed mixtures).
2. The area can be cut once the flowers have died back in the autumn. We recommend leaving the area undisturbed for as long as possible, ideally until February / March (before the first spring growth). The dead flowers and stems provide a diverse environment which is a haven for wildlife through the winter months. It provides habitat for butterflies such as the Red Admiral and the Clouded Yellow which remain in their chrysalis during the winter months.
3. Cut the area down to around 10cm using a scythe, strimmer or mower, leaving the cuttings for up to a week before removing. This will allow them to dry and shed seeds back into the soil.

## Second Year

1. After twelve months the sward should be well established and requires little additional maintenance. Simply follow the same annual cut pattern (either in spring or autumn depending on your preference).
2. As an ongoing process, observe and remove any weeds which invade the area.
3. Over time, some species within the mixture may become more dominant due to environmental factors and natural selection. To encourage diversity, simply reduce the number of dominant plants in order to restore the balance.