

## GARDENING WITH DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS

### Meadow Gardening

Why meadow gardening? It has many rewards and benefits:

- Seasonal progression of flowering without additional planting
- Increase of butterfly and bee population
- Attraction for birds
- Minimum water use and care for upkeep,
- No fertilizing or mowing.

Consider the area where you like to plant. Are there trees and bushes that could give shade? Are there areas with natural growth, which would be best left alone? Fields with ground cover, wild flowers and ferns for example can be very attractive, so is tall grass. Trees and bushes help the sustenance of animals, birds and humans. We begin to realize that we can do enormous harm by taking away habitats of animal species and create environmental damage which is expensive, time consuming and often beyond repair.

Consider the site when starting a plan

- Dry sunny location, open fields require plants that are drought tolerant, eg.
- Echinacea, Rudbeckia, Coreopsis (see lists included)
- Wet fields require water loving plants: Asters, Joe Pye Weed, Summersweet,

Most plants need about 4 hours of sun in order to bloom.

Consider the soil condition and which plants have grown there before.

### PREPARATION:

If you want quick results you can bring in fresh soil that is sifted, free from stones, and other desirable debris. Natural weed growth can be vigorous. The first year can be difficult and you may need to go in the field to pull out some invasive plants or small shrubs which keep coming back. That is hard work.

The depth of soil should be 4-6 inches, to be worthwhile.

There are various methods to prepare the soil:

### PLANTING

To spread the seed combine with coarse sand (ratio 1 part seed- 10 part sand) since seed can be very small and hard to scatter.

Follow the direction of the supplier for the amounts.

#### SEASONAL VARIATIONS:

To achieve color in the first year it is good to have some annuals in the seed mix; development of perennials takes longer.

After the meadow starts to go in bloom you will see flowers throughout the season, punctuating the flower that comes in bloom first.

The seed mix can be determined by the seed company or you can make up your own, but be sure you include plants that are drought tolerant or you will see little color during a dry summer.

Look into two wonderful websites; also see a listing of books.

#### MAINTENANCE:

The first season is critical for meadow gardens. When we have a dry year, it may be necessary to continue watering until plants are established. The first two years are the most labor intensive; at this time it may be to pull out some invasives such as ragweed, vetch, or purple loosestrife.

The meadow garden needs mowing ONCE A YEAR, in late fall after the first frost. Paths through the meadow can be very attractive and allows us a special landscaping aspect.

## NATIONAL Suppliers of Seeds

American Meadows Inc.  
4750 Shelbourne Road  
Shelbourne, VT 05482 USA  
Phone : (802)985-9455  
[www.americanmeadows.com](http://www.americanmeadows.com)

Prairie Nursery  
Westfield, WI  
1-800-476- 9453  
[www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)

The New England Wildflower Society in Framingham offers classes, and local displays to see seasonal changes. They also sell seed mixes.

[www.newfs.org](http://www.newfs.org)

Vesey's Seeds  
York, Prince Edward Island, Canada-COP1PO  
[Veseys@veseys.com](mailto:Veseys@veseys.com)  
Order Desk: 800) 363-7333

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

- Meadow and Meadow Gardens, N.E. Wild Flower Society Publication
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- Roadside Wildflowers, Peterson Flash Guide, Roger Tory Peterson
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- A Field Guide to wildflowers of the North Eastern and North-Central North America , Roger Tory Peterson and Margaret Mc Kenny
- 
- North American Wildlife Wildflowers, A Reader's Digest Field Guide
- 
- The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Wildflowers Eastern Region
- 
- The New Field Book of American Wildflowers , Harold William Rickett.