

Establishing Wildflower Meadow Habitat for Pollinators

Before seeding a wildflower meadow habitat, competing vegetation must be eliminated. To ensure successful establishment and longevity of pollinator meadows, invasive species control is a critical part of any meadow installation and management. Important considerations for maximizing success include:

- Eliminating competing vegetation, especially vigorous woody species, perennial broadleaf weeds, and persistent rhizomatous grasses, before seeding wildflowers.
- Ongoing control of invasive species and other undesirable plants to maintain diverse meadow plant communities.
- Where wildflowers are being seeded as strips within fields, make strips as wide as possible. Narrow strips are prone to weed encroachment because of greater edge to interior ratio. Planting larger, contiguous blocks where possible is recommended.

The details of this establishment plan were created by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

OVERVIEW OF MEADOW IMPLEMENTATION STEPS FOR WORLD'S END

Site preparation and planting will include 1) removal of existing vegetation, 2) preparation of seedbed, and 3) planting. These steps will cross calendar years with the removal of existing vegetation beginning in the fall of the first year and the completion of planting in the fall of the second year. Seeds planted will intentionally be planted in the fall as many native species require or benefit from cold stratification which promotes germination and seedling emergence, and results in more vigorous plants the following spring.

Fall: apply non-selective herbicide to eliminate weeds and competing vegetation. Complete control is not anticipated with this first application. Existing root systems will remain in place and vegetation will be left standing.

Mid-May: mow site as short as possible. Apply non-selective herbicide when weeds grow to 3-4 inches.

Summer: Repeat above step each time plants grow to 3-4 inches. Do not allow annuals to flower. At each step, there should be fewer plants growing.

Late Fall: Prepare a clean seedbed – at this stage, there should be minimal plant growth and bare soil exposed. Sow wildflower mix using seed drill. Do not disturb the soil. The final seedbed preparation should occur immediately before or within a few days of seeding the pollinator mix and will depend on recommended seeding dates according to the species within the mix.

Following growing season and ongoing: spot weed control during meadow establishment for any invasive or undesirable plants