

Magical Meadows

Transforming Lawns to Meadows



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Mission + Residential Program

Conserving the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Nanticoke River watershed.

Residential Plantings for People and Pollinators Program

- Pollinator gardens
- Designer ditches
- Meadows
- Tree plantings and understory shrub plantings
- Rain barrels

WHY WE ARE BUZZING ABOUT NATIVES

What is a Native Plant?
A native plant is a plant that occurs naturally in a particular region, without human introduction. Delmarva's native butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, and other pollinators have evolved over thousands of years to rely on native host plants.

Native Plants & Pollinators:
Non-native plants support far fewer pollinators and birds than native plants do. If you want to Bee a pollinator-ally, you'll want at least 70% of your plants to be native.

- Pollinators are needed for the reproduction of 90% of all flowering plants and most of the vegetables we eat. Many pollinators cannot survive without a specific plant, such as the monarch butterfly and its host plant, milkweed.
- This native garden includes plants with a variety of bloom times to ensure both mature and juvenile pollinators have plenty of food throughout the growing season.
- Pollinators are in decline due to increased pesticide use, decreased habitats, and increased non-native plants.

**Bee a pollinator-ally and plant a native garden.
Visit NanticokeRiver.org for help!**

Nanticoke Watershed Alliance
Illustrations and design © Faye McGee

DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

GOLDFINCH
PURPLE CONEFLOWER
MONARCH BUTTERFLY
BUTTERFLY MILKWEED
BUMBLEBEE
BLACK SWALLOWTAIL
RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD
BLACK-EYED SUSAN



Why a Meadow?

- Cheaper and easier (after year one) to maintain than a lawn, fewer emissions, more biodiversity, much greater nitrogen and carbon storage
- Living classroom
- Four-season entertainment
- Support specific bees, butterflies and moths, and/or birds with your mix



Meadow Considerations

- Has the area been mowed regularly or have weeds and grasses been allowed to go to seed?
- Are there invasive plants in the project site area?
- Is the soil boggy or well-draining?
- How large is the area? Is it reasonable for me to prep and maintain the meadow size, or will I be overwhelmed?
- Do I have philosophical differences with any of the site prep techniques?
- How much time do I have to prep? Am I planning an autumn or spring sowing?





Site Prep

Larger areas

1. Triple-trill
2. Spray and lightly cultivate

Smaller areas

3. Solarize
4. Remove lawn with a sod cutter
5. Use hand tools to remove turf

Site prep will determine the success or failure of your project.





Plugs Or Seeds?

Plugs

- More expensive
- Instant gratification
- More effort to plant
- Can include nativars

Seeds

- Cheaper
- Can purchase curated mixes
- Easier to sow
- Need more patience

Retail

Izel Plants - [.izelplants.com](http://izelplants.com)

Environmental Concern - seasonal retail opportunities with limited plug availability

Partner with an organization (like NWA) who can purchase at wholesale

Ernst Conservation Seeds

ernstseed.com

(ecotypes + mix and seed selection)

Prairie Moon

prairiemoon.com

(features shady mixes)

Pinelands Nursery

[.pinelandsnursery.com](http://pinelandsnursery.com)

(ecotypes)

Choosing (Or Making) Your Meadow Mix

- Soil condition (dry, moist, wet)
- Light (full sun, part sun, shade)
- Instant gratification with non-native annuals included or native-only mix?
- How important is ecotype (local seeds or plants) to you?
- Are there must-have plants that aren't included in any of the mixes?
- Do you want to build an ultra-niche meadow mix (e.g., specialist bee mix)?
- Always include native grasses!
- Don't forget your cover crop



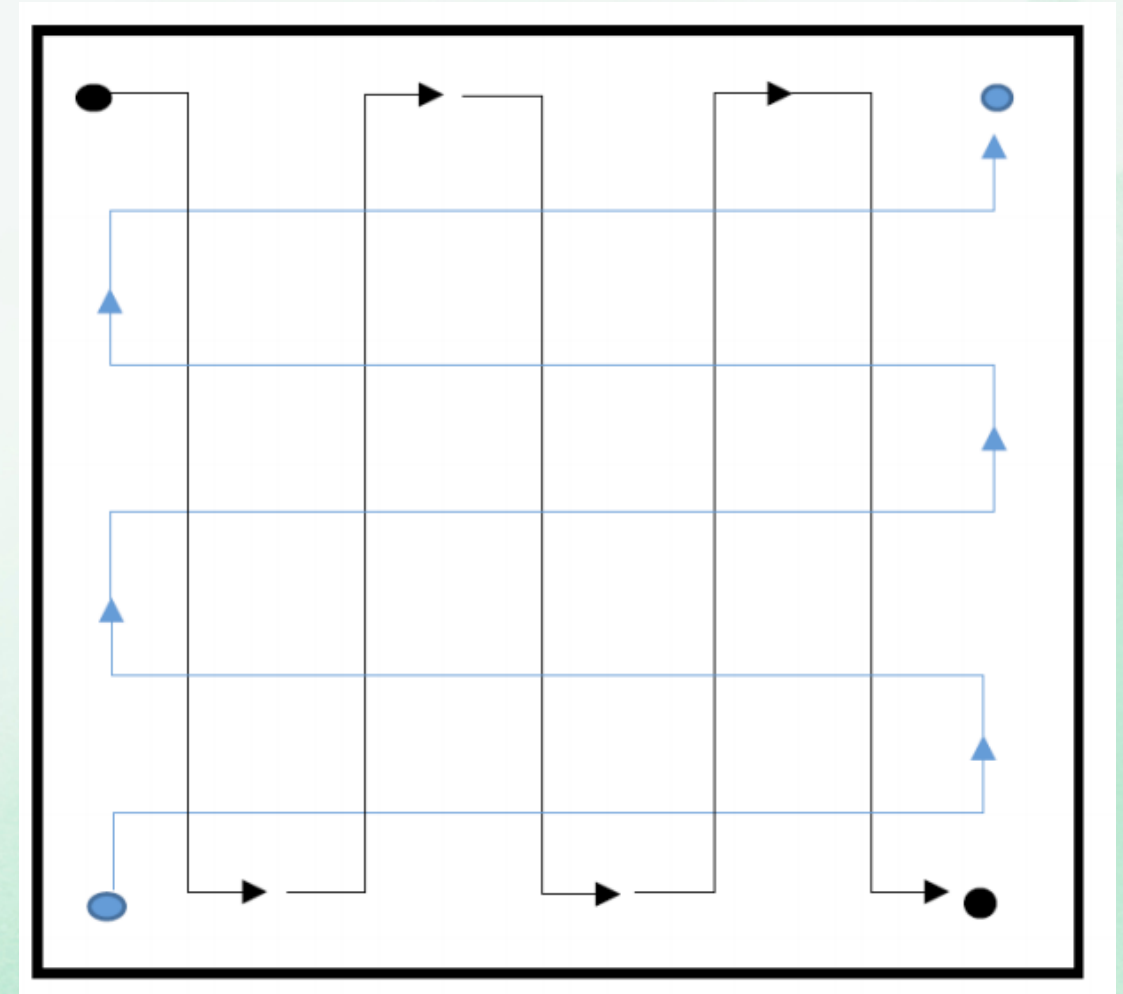


Sowing Your Meadow

Hand-sow or use a spreader

- Mix cover with wildflower seeds or sow separately
- Can add sand or kitty litter (and small amounts of water) to help bind smaller seeds and get an even spread
- Divide mix into at least two parts to ensure you have adequate seeding (for up-and-down and side-to-side passes)
- Stomp on, use a roller or even a small tractor, or rake in seed

Lightly scatter EZ Straw on the sowed area



Credit: UNH



First-year Maintenance



Mow meadow 3-4 times (cut to height of 6-8")

watch out for invasives and remove them!



If you seeded, you MUST be willing to mow 3-4 times the first year. Yes, you will cut off flower heads but you will be providing optimal conditions for native plants to grow.





Maintenance Beyond Year One

- Continue to watch for and remove any and all invasive plants
- Mow once per year, preferably in spring (April)
 - There is no perfect time to mow, but you need to mow before there is too much new growth. Insects emerge at different temperatures and in different seasons.
 - Allowing seeds to stand overwinter provides food and habitat for birds, small mammals, and insects.
- OPTIONAL: (Year Four and beyond): If you are willing to stay on top of invasive plants, you may mow one-third of your meadow each year, rotating the cut section so that 100% of your meadow is mowed every three years.
 - This gives non-early spring insects a chance to emerge.



Resources

Owen Wormser: [Lawns into Meadows: Growing a Regenerative Landscape](#)

Heather Holm: [Bees: An Identification and Native Plant Forage Guide](#)

[Wasps: A Guide for Eastern North America](#)

[Pollinators of Native Plants](#)

[SUNY-ESF: Converting Lawns to Meadows Pocket Guide:](#)

[www.esf.edu/research/restorationscience/documents/landowner-](http://www.esf.edu/research/restorationscience/documents/landowner-manual.pdf)

[manual.pdf](http://www.esf.edu/research/restorationscience/documents/landowner-manual.pdf) (Gearing toward Central NYS residents but still has a lot of good

[info that still applies on Delmarva.](http://www.esf.edu/research/restorationscience/documents/landowner-manual.pdf)



A large field of pink and yellow wildflowers in front of a dense forest. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some fully open and others as buds. The background is a thick line of green trees under a blue sky with light clouds.

Thank You!

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