



## Native Pollinator Seed Mix - Quick Tips

- **Refrigerate Seeds** - Your seed packet has been exposed to cold temperatures (refrigeration) for stratification to help simulate real-world conditions a seed would receive outdoors to help with germination. It is recommended to continue storing your seeds in the fridge until planting and avoid exposure to heat. Seeds can be kept in the fridge for up to a year, taking care to keep the seed packet dry.
- **When to Plant** - The ideal planting time for this seed mix is early spring (March) or fall (between September 15 and November 1). If the mix is spring-planted, some of species will likely remain dormant in the soil until the fall, and vice versa for a fall planting. Fall plantings can increase success since it allows more time to properly deal with weeds and competing vegetation.
- **Measure your Planting Area** - Each seed packet is formulated to cover 100 square feet at a density of 40 seeds per square foot.
- **Prepare the Soil for Planting** - To establish seed, it is recommended to sow on bare, weed-free ground. The publication *Establishing Pollinator Meadows from Seed* gives step-by-step instructions on how to prepare the soil for planting. It can be found on the Xerces Society website at: <http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/EstablishingPollinatorMeadows.pdf>.
  - **Summer soil solarization**, using clear UV-stabilized plastic sheeting (6 mil plastic is recommended) is one of the most consistently successful site preparation methods. Plastic needs to be left in place for several months during the hottest time of the year to effectively kill the vegetation and weed seeds. To solarize follow these steps:
    - 1) Remove all vegetation in the spring by mowing and raking off debris.
    - 2) Irrigate then lay down plastic.
    - 3) Bury the edges of the plastic to prevent airflow under the plastic (the goal is to heat up the soil temperatures to kill vegetation and weed seeds).
    - 4) In the early fall remove the plastic and immediately plant your pollinator seed mix.



- **Planting Seed** - Hand scatter seed directly onto the soil surface, shaking the seed mix periodically during sowing to ensure the seed remains evenly distributed in the mix. It is not necessary to bury or cover the seed with soil. If the soil is wet it is not advised to compact the seed into the soil with a roller or garden tractor since seed can stick to the roller or tires and lead to an uneven distribution of the seed mix.



- **Irrigation** - The species in the pollinator mix are drought tolerant and generally do not need supplemental watering. In severe drought conditions some watering may be needed to ensure seedling survival. Once plants are established they likely will not need supplementation water, especially since irrigation may encourage/favor weed growth.
- **Fertilization** - It is not necessary to fertilize your pollinator meadow. Doing so may encourage weed growth.
- **Mowing** - Once your pollinator meadow is mature, only mow one-third to one-fourth of the meadow in a single season. No single area should be mowed more frequently than every two years to protect dormant insects and larvae. Leaving patches un-mowed will support native insects. It may be necessary to reseed your pollinator meadow after several years or if the area becomes infested with weeds.

### **Additional Resources:**

Northwest Meadows: <https://northwestmeadowscapes.com>

Xerces Society: <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation>

USDA Forest Service: <https://www.fs.fed.us/wilflowers/pollinators/index.shtml>

WSU Extension: [extension.wsu.edu/Snohomish/home-pollination/](https://extension.wsu.edu/Snohomish/home-pollination/)