



SUGGESTED RESTORATION METHODS – TOP TIPS 2020

www.herefordshiremeadows.org.uk has more detailed resources available

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- When you are creating or enhancing a wildflower meadow you are planting a crop. It is no different from planting a commercial grass crop or a field of wheat.
- Reduce competition from other plants as much as possible.
- Spot spray or hand pull weeds in the sward throughout the early summer. Much easier to deal with weeds now than after broad leaved plants have been introduced.
- If reseeding commercial leys then consider spraying off old ley. If ryegrass or commercial clover cultivars are very vigorous then repeat treatment until you are sure you have good control. Use stale seedbed if necessary until weed seed bank depleted.
- If enhancing then either mow or graze the field tight to the ground. Keep the sward very short until the soil conditions are right to prepare the field for the seed to be broadcast
- Create at least 50% bare ground by harrowing/scarifying/discing strips or wider areas
 - good seed soil contact is possible without going too deep (½ to ¾ inch is ideal) which might disturb unwanted weed seed in the existing sward.
 - Knock back the vigour of the existing grasses so that the introduced broad leaved plants can get established without much competition scarifying
 - improvise on the day until you get it right to avoid waste of seed and effort in long term
 - Avoid harrowing areas of archaeological interest
 - If rotavating where already have some botanical interest then confine cultivation to narrow strips to minimize damage to existing plants
- Broadcast the seed in any way that keeps the varying sizes of wildflower seeds evenly distributed in the seed hopper / bucket. (Please discuss method if not sure)

eg by hand, air seeder, seed drill with coulters on the surface, slug pelleter, fertiliser spreader etc.

- Consider using a filler such as sand when broadcasting very low seed rates
- Roll after broadcasting or use livestock to trample seed into soil
- Graze / Top frequently as necessary to ensure germinating broad leaved plants don't get smothered by grass regrowth.
- Timing of cutting is critical to avoid smothering by cut material and to avoid cutting yellow rattle as this annual plant needs to flower / set seed to persist in the sward.
- Manage as traditional hay meadow or by grazing to allow plants to flower and set seed
- In future manage the meadow with very low inputs and according to any existing "scheme" prescriptions you are committed to. Light dressings of FYM may be helpful if taking hay crop
- Keep on top of any weeds that establish
- Consider repeating the enhancement in future years. You are unlikely to get the best results after single operation

Special notes for green hay strewing

Donor Site

- Be as gentle as possible to retain maximum seed – mower conditioners not suitable
- Take the bales to the receptor site as soon as possible and unroll (within 3 hrs max)

Receptor site

- Ted the grass to knock all the seed out. If possible leave for a few days to dry out, then ted again
- Make sure that the seed is in contact with the soil. Once all the seed has been knocked out it can be rolled or use livestock to tread it into the ground

This is a very brief list of top tips. See www.herefordshiremeadows.org.uk for more detailed methods, seek advice and talk to others who've already made meadow.