

# B-friendly in your community

Making parks and grassy areas more flower-rich is a great way to help bees, butterflies and other insect pollinators...



## Every patch of flowers will contribute to developing the B-Lines network!

Almost everybody will have grass verges or green spaces near their home and many have very little value for wildlife. However, if they are managed slightly differently, they can provide a colourful show of wildflowers that will brighten up your neighbourhood, and provide vital nectar and pollen resources for our bees and butterflies.

### choose the right plants

Many of the plants used in floral bedding displays often produce no pollen or nectar, or have very complicated flower shapes that block insect access. There are many alternative plants that can be used which not only look great but are pollinator friendly too. The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) provide extensive lists of Garden Plants and Wildflowers that are perfect for pollinators. Use more perennials to save money.

Blossoming trees like cherries, apples, maples, horse chestnuts, pear, hawthorn, blackthorn and rowans are also great for pollinators.



Red clover and small white butterfly (*Pieris rapae*)  
©Leanna Dixon

### cut grass less

Constant mowing prevents the growth of wildflowers. Cutting grassy areas fewer times will allow wildflowers to grow, adding a splash of colour to the landscape. It could save precious time and money!

Even allowing buttercups, dandelions, clover and self-heal to bloom and leaving edges uncut can also make a substantial difference.



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## How to create a community meadow

### Enhancing an existing grassland

Wildflower meadows can be created from existing grassy areas. However, just sowing wildflower seed onto a grassy area will not be successful. Wildflowers will struggle to grow in dense, vigorous grass – ground preparation is the key to success. You need to expose the soil or create gaps in the grass for wildflowers to stand a chance of growing.

The best way to do this is to:

- **Cut the grass very short** and **remove the cuttings**.
- **Break up the soil** to expose bare ground and create gaps in the grass to give the wildflowers space to grow.
- **Sow wildflower seed or plant plug plants**

In addition you may want to consider enlisting some assistance from Mother Nature - **Yellow rattle** (*Rhinanthus minor*) is a parasitic plant that weakens the grass. Yellow rattle seed can be included within your wildflower seed mix.

### Planting a new meadow

- **Removing the turf and topsoil** will considerably reduce the nutrient levels of the soil, making it more suitable for wildflowers. Strip the existing turf along with the first 5-10cm of topsoil.
- The site now needs to be **raked** to break up the surface. This should be done just before seeding.
- **Sow** a mixture of wildflower seed and grasses into the soil. Try to get a good mix of species to ensure a long flowering season with flowers of different shape and size. This will maximise the suitability of the site for a variety of different pollinator species.

**Further information on how to create a community meadow and how to manage it is available in our Community Meadows Pack which can be downloaded from [www.buglife.org.uk](http://www.buglife.org.uk).**

### Contact your council

Find out whether your council are taking action in your local community to support bees and other pollinators. If they are, support them, if they aren't then why not contact them to try and make changes. It will benefit wildlife, make your neighbourhood more flowery and could save the council money.



### Get your children involved

**Encourage your children to get their school to:**

- **Plant** a wildflower meadow in their grounds
- **Plant** flowering shrubs and fruit trees
- **Learn** about pollinators in lessons with our downloadable education resources

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