

## Further information

### [www.floralocale.org](http://www.floralocale.org)

For suppliers of British native flora, propagation techniques, case studies and online library. See especially: *Discover wild plants*; *Go Native! Planting for biodiversity*; Bringing back the meadows series: *Sources of advice and information*; *Enhancing the floral diversity of semi-improved grassland*; *Managing recently created grasslands*; *Obtaining native seed*; *Sowing wild flora seed*; *Flowers on the verge: planting on roadside verges*.

### [www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)

For many useful publications, including *Wildflower meadows: how to create one in your garden*.

### [www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk)

For your local wildlife trust.

### [www.conservationfoundation.org.uk](http://www.conservationfoundation.org.uk)

Register for The Parish Pump Programme which includes news on community projects, funding and more.

### [www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/index.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/index.asp)

The RHS Britain in Bloom campaign recognises the value of managing public open spaces for native wild plants.

### [www.alge.org.uk](http://www.alge.org.uk) and [www.ieem.org.uk](http://www.ieem.org.uk)

To find your local ecologist.

### [www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk](http://www.wildlife-gardening.co.uk)

For information on native plants in the garden environment, includes information on wild flowers, ponds and trees.



**Flora locale, Denford Manor, Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0UN**

Tel: 01488 680 458 Email: [info@floralocale.org](mailto:info@floralocale.org) Website: [www.floralocale.org](http://www.floralocale.org)

Flora locale is a national charity established to promote the wise use of native flora for countryside restoration and other conservation planting projects

Registered Charity No 107212 and Registered Company No 3539595. Flora locale gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). © Flora locale 2005.



# wild plants and your village green

Promoting the wise use and supply of native flora



**Village greens can be havens for wild plants** that have disappeared from large areas of the countryside.

**Many are not realising their potential for wild flora** because they are mown frequently and are no longer grazed by livestock. Today, village greens are often flower-less, close-mown lawns.

**In many cases** (other uses permitting) **wild plants characteristic to the local area can return** – with a little help and little (if any) extra expense. Interested? Then read on ...

## Restoring wildflower grassland on your village green

**step 1** Consider the current use of the green; areas in frequent recreational use will be unsuitable. However, even choosing a small area to convert to a wildflower grassland will enhance your village green.

**step 2** Do not cut the grass between April and mid-July in your chosen area, except for paths. Identify the wild plants that grow there. You may discover that there is already a wildflower grassland just waiting to burst into flower – see Step 3. Or perhaps there is only grass and a few buttercups – see Step 4.

## There are already lots of wild flowers ...

**step 3** Congratulations! Your village has a wild flower habitat that has become rare over much of the countryside. This needs to be nurtured and protected. Produce a grass cutting and maintenance plan\*. This will probably involve one cut at the end of March, no cutting between April and mid-July, a single hay cut (with the grass removed) in July, followed by mowing the whole area three or four times until the end of the growing season to keep the grass short. This routine may need to vary, depending on the wild flowers present and other constraints.

## Sadly, there are very few wild flowers ...

**step 4** To develop a wildflower grassland seed or plants will need to be introduced. First consider which species are suitable\*. Those chosen will need to suit the soils, location and climate.

**step 5** Consider methods of ground preparation\*. Alternatives are discing, rotavating, or spraying herbicide to create bare patches. Seed or wildflower plug plants can then be introduced into these areas. Never sow seed straight onto grass as it will not germinate.

**step 6** Work out the costs (if any). You may be eligible for grant aid from the Lottery Fund or local council, especially if your project involves the local community.

**step 7** Consider where to obtain seed and plants from, and how much will be needed.

**Obtaining seed:** It may be possible to collect seed from a local wildflower grassland or from roadside verges. Seed collecting can involve the community. Some seed could be propagated and grown by local people and planted out in the autumn or spring. Alternatively, seed-rich hay might be obtained from a nearby wildflower grassland and strewn directly over the bare patches. Other seed should be sown in early September, then rolled or stamped in.

**Buying seed:** See *Flora locale's* website for a list of suppliers. Always ask for source-identified seed (origin known) and remember that a few grammes goes a very long way. Do not buy seed mixtures – these may include inappropriate species and grasses, which are not needed. If buying seed, make your own seed mix from chosen species. Include a little fresh Yellow Rattle seed; this species will help to reduce grass vigour, allowing other wild flowers to thrive.

**step 8** Produce a mowing and maintenance plan (see Step 3). The first year after sowing seed the meadow should be cut to a height of 20 cms in May and the cuttings removed. It will take about two years for most sown species to flower and five years for the meadow to establish.

## Trees and shrubs, woodland areas

If planting trees and shrubs, consider species that are typical to the locality rather than garden types. Buy from a forest nursery that follows the Forestry Commission's Voluntary Identification scheme rather than the local garden centre.

Locally characteristic woodland wild flowers can be sown or planted in shady areas if competitive vegetation, such as Rough Meadow-grass, Cleavers and Cow Parsley have been removed. Native Bluebell is best established by sowing seed; this can be collected in mid-June from local woodland (seek permission from the landowner first).

## Garden plants and your village green

Garden plants have a role in enhancing the built environment. However, their use is best restricted to gardens and land within built-up areas. Wherever possible, use native species characteristic to the locality. Garden plants should not be introduced into the countryside or rural road verges, especially beside ponds, streams and rivers.

## Existing wildlife habitats

Remember to protect and maintain existing wildlife habitats. These may include areas of scrub, ponds, rough grass margins and old trees. Ideally, carry out a biodiversity audit and produce a management plan\* for your green that is understood by local people. A grant may be available.

\* Seek advice from an ecologist or the local wildlife trust and look at *Flora locale's* website.