



PLANTING A CALIFORNIA NATIVE WILDFLOWER MEADOW/GARDEN

Getting Started

- Choose an area with:
 - Good drainage
 - Loose average soil
 - No or only light mulch
 - Sun or partial shade depending on seed requirements – know where particular wildflowers are found in nature ie in open marshy fields, on dry slopes, under trees.
- Be sure area is free of weeds and their seeds:
 - Water area a couple of weeks beforehand to germinate weed seeds or
 - Wait for the first rain of the season (usually October or November), and then weed thoroughly over the next couple of weeks. Wildflower seeds are tiny and easily overwhelmed by weeds.
- Obtain seeds from:
 - Local nurseries or specialty native plant nurseries
 - Catalogs, or
 - Collect your own making sure they are mature and dry (and that collection is permitted!).
- Plan your meadow/garden:
 - Height scheme - taller plants in back if against a wall, in the middle if area flat and open.
 - Color scheme - Put contrasting colors next to each other i.e. blues or purples next to reds yellows or oranges, but not next to each other.
 - Or combine all seeds for a mixed effect.



Planting

- Prime time:
 - Literally right before a rain in October, November or until early spring.
- Why not other times:
 - Seeds set out too soon before rain might be eaten by birds or disturbed.
 - Seedlings are very delicate, and seeds set out too late in the season are prone to drying out quickly due to the heat. Even if they do make it to maturity, flowering is not as abundant and leaves don't appear as healthy as when planted in the cooler seasons.
- Preventing the tiny seeds from sticking to your hands:
 - Mix them in a container with some light soil or sand.
- Distributing seeds:
 - Broadcast small handfuls of seed/soil mixture to designated areas.
 - No need to rake in, but marching on your flower bed with shoes on often helps imbed seeds in the soil and aids germination of those with hard coverings.

Germination and Maintenance

- Keep soil consistently moist until germination which can be a few days to a couple of weeks.
- No need to ever add fertilizer, amendments or mulch!
- Weed early and often, trying to catch weeds young so roots won't disturb wildflower roots when pulled up.
- Reseed bare or thin areas as needed through spring. Wildflowers are fast growers, sprouting within a few short days. Blooms can appear within 6-8 weeks.
- When weather is cool, no need to water. Simply wait for rain. If you must water, do so no more than 1x-2x/week. The rule for natives is...water deeply, but infrequently.



CALIFORNIA NATIVE WILDFLOWER FAVORITES

1. California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*) – 1 ½' high; produces satiny, bright, deep orange to yellow showy flowers which close at night and in cloudy weather. Removing old flower stems promotes additional flowering. Likes full sun.
2. Baby Blue-Eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*) – 6" high; produces carpets of lovely sky-blue flowers with white circular centers. Likes dry shade and protection from strong winds. Good bulb cover.
3. Chinese Houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*) – 2' high; produces fascinating white and lavender bicolored flowers that look like snapdragon blossoms balanced on tiers. Likes partial shade.
4. California Bluebell (*Phacelia campanularia*) – 1' to 2' high; prolific producer of brilliant royal purple or deep blue bell-shaped flowers. Likes partial sun to shade.
5. Globe Gilia (*Gilia capitata*) – 2' high; unique periwinkle-blue flower clusters and finely dissected leaves give an airy feeling. Likes sun or partial shade.
6. Bird's Eye Gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) – 10" to 20" high; produces pale to deep blue-violet flowers. Distinguished by five pairs of purple spots at base of each flower petal. Like partial sun and shade.
7. Five Spot (*Nemophila maculata*) – 6" high; similar to Baby Blue-Eyes but has purple lines and a large purple dot on each flower petal. Like sun to partial shade
8. Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*) – 8 to 18" high; produces carpet of bright yellow flowers tipped with a white fringe. Likes full sun.
9. Farewell to Spring (*Clarkia cylindrica* or *Clarkia amoena*) – 1' to 2' high; produces pale pink or lavender satiny flowers. Starts blooming late spring/early summer. Likes full sun to partial shade
10. Mountain Garland or Elegant Clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata* or *Clarkia elegans*) – 2' to 3' high; produces rose, purple, white, salmon or fuchsia colored flowers. Very showy. Likes full sun to partial shade.

Seed collecting from your garden:

It is best to leave mature plants in the ground until completely brown and dry. Then you can simply pull each up by the roots and turn the entire plant upside down over a large paper grocery bag. Give a little shake and you'll hear them drop in like rain. Store in a cool dry place in a brown bag.



Spring blooming California Natives
for a WILDFLOWER MEADOW



CA Bluebells
Phacelia campanularia



Clarkia
Clarkia unguiculata



Lacy Phacelia
Phacelia tanacetifolia



CA Poppy
Eschscholzia californica



Baby Blue Eyes
Nemophila menziesii



Clarkia
Clarkia amoena



Tidy-Tips
Layia platyglossa



Globe Gilia
Gilia capitata



Bird's-Eyes
Gilia tricolor