

# Wild flowers for the garden

GWF482

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Many wild flowers make good garden plants in the right places. Here we suggest suitable species for a range of different situations including borders and lawns.

Wild flowers are often beautiful, or intriguing, and worth a place in your garden for this reason alone. In addition, many wild flowers are being squeezed out of the countryside by development and intensive farming, so gardens present a valuable opportunity to conserve them, and attract other wildlife too. For advice on raising wild flowers from seed, and managing meadows, see *Gardening Which?* factsheet GWF483. For a list of suppliers of wild flower seed, plugs, bulbs and plants see GWF484.



## Banks and hedges

Familiar plants which thrive on hedge banks, overgrown walls and other dryish, sunny spots.

**Agrimony** *Agrimonia eupatoria*  
yellow, Jun-Aug, short

**Alexanders** *Smyrniolus olusatrum*  
green, Apr-Jun, tall

**Biting stonecrop** *Sedum acre*  
yellow, May-Jul, short

**Common rock-rose** *Helianthemum nummularium* yellow, Jun-Aug, short

**Garlic mustard** *Alliaria petiolata*  
white, Apr-Jul, tall

**Greater celandine** *Chelidonium majus* yellow, Jun-Aug, medium

**Ground ivy** *Glechoma hederacea*  
purple, nectar, Apr-Jun, short

**Green alkanet** *Pentaglottis sempervirens* blue, May-Jun, tall

**Herb Robert** *Geranium robertianum* pink, Jun-Aug, short

**Lady's mantle** *Alchemilla vulgaris*

green, Jun-Aug, medium

**Nettle-leaved bellflower** *Campanula trachelium* blue, Jul-Sep, tall

**Rough hawkbit** *Leontodon hispidus*  
yellow, Jun-Oct, short

**Thrift** *Armeria maritima* pink, May-Jul, short

## Border annuals

These are mostly cornfield weeds, which are best sown in autumn for a colourful show the following year.

**Common poppy** *Papaver rhoeas*  
red, Jun-Jul, medium

**Corn chamomile** *Chamaemelum nobile* white, Jun-Jul, short

**Corncockle** *Agrostemma githago*  
red-purple, nectar, Jun-Aug, tall

**Cornflower** *Centaurea cyanus*  
blue, nectar, Jun-Aug, medium

**Corn marigold** *Chrysanthemum segetum* yellow, Jun-Aug, medium

**Welsh poppy** *Meconopsis cambrica*  
yellow, Jun-Jul, medium

## Border perennials

Attractive wildflowers that are also good for wildlife. We've avoided the most invasive, but remember that wildflowers are good colonisers so watch out for spreading roots or seeds.

**Betony** *Stachys officinalis* red-purple, nectar, Jul-Oct, medium

**Chicory** *Cichorium intybus*  
blue, nectar, Jul-Oct, tall

**Clustered bellflower** *Campanula glomerata* blue-purple, nectar, May-Sep, medium

**Devil's bit scabious** *Succisa pratensis* blue, nectar, Jun-Sep, medium, caterpillar food plant

**Greater knapweed** *Centaurea scabiosa* red-purple, nectar, Jul-Sep, tall

**Hedge woundwort** *Stachys sylvatica* red-purple, nectar, Jul-Sep, tall

**Hemp agrimony** *Eupatorium cannabinum* dull pink, nectar, Jul-Sep, tall

**Marjoram** *Origanum vulgare*  
pink, nectar, Jul-Sep, short

**Meadow cranesbill** *Geranium pratense* blue-purple, nectar, Jun-Sep, tall

**Musk mallow** *Malva moschata*  
pink, nectar, Jul-Aug, tall

**Night-flowering catchfly** *Silene noctiflora* pink, Jul-Aug, short

**Primrose** *Primula vulgaris*  
pale yellow, Feb-May, short

**Purple loosetrite** *Lythrum salicaria* red-purple, Jun-Aug, tall

**Sainfoin** *Onobrychis viciifolia*  
pink, nectar, Jun-Aug, medium

**Sea kale** *Crambe maritima*  
white, nectar, Jun-Aug, tall  
**Soapwort** *Saponaria officinalis*  
pink, nectar, Aug-Oct, medium  
**Stinking hellebore** *Helleborus foetidus* green, Mar-Apr, medium  
**Tansy** *Tanacetum vulgare*  
white, nectar, Jul-Sep, medium  
**Teasel** *Dipsacus fullonum*  
pink, nectar, seeds, Jul-Aug, tall  
**Viper's bugloss** *Echium vulgare*  
blue, nectar, Jun-Sep, medium  
**White deadnettle** *Lamium album*  
white, nectar, Apr-Jun, medium  
**Wild thyme** *Thymus drucei*  
pink, nectar, Jun-Aug, short  
**Yellow toadflax** *Linaria vulgaris*  
yellow, nectar, Jul-Oct, short

## Flowerly lawns

These plants will all tolerate frequent mowing. Leave the lawn uncut for a few weeks in May or June and they will flower, then cut the lawn as normal.

**Bird's-foot-trefoil** *Lotus corniculatus* yellow, Jun-Aug, short  
**Daisy** *Bellis perennis* white, Mar-Oct, short  
**Dandelion** *Taraxacum officinale* yellow, seeds, Mar-Jun, short  
**Germander speedwell** *Veronica chaemaedrys* blue, nectar, Mar-Aug, short  
**Lesser celandine** *Ranunculus ficaria* yellow, Mar-May, short  
**Horseshoe vetch** *Hippocrepis comosa* yellow, May-Jun, short  
**Mouse-ear hawkweed** *Pilosella vulgaris* yellow, Jun-Aug, short  
**Ribwort plantain** *Plantago lanceolata* cream, Apr-Aug, short  
**Self-heal** *Prunella vulgaris* purple, nectar, Jun-Sep, short  
**Yarrow** *Achillea millefolium* white, nectar, Jun-Aug, short

## Meadow grasses

**Brown bent** *Agrostis canina*;  
**Common bent** *Agrostis capillaris*;  
**Crested dog's-tail** *Cynosaurus cristatus*;  
**Downy oat-grass** *Avenula pubescens*;  
**Meadow barley** *Hordeum secalinu*;  
**Quaking**

**grass** *Briza media*;  
**Red fescue** *Festuca rubra*;  
**Sheep's fescue** *Festuca ovina* ;  
**Smooth meadow-grass** *Poa pratensis*;  
**Sweet vernal-grass** *Anthoxanthum odoratum*;  
**Timothy** *Phleum pratense*;  
**Wavy hair-grass** *Deschampsia flexuosa*;  
**Yellow oat-grass** *Trisetum flavescens* and  
**Yorkshire fog** *Holcus lanatus*

## Spring meadow

A spring meadow should be cut in July and November, plus September if need be.

**Bulbous buttercup** *Ranunculus bulbosus* yellow, May-Jul, medium  
**Cowslip** *Primula veris* yellow, Apr-May, short  
**Lady's smock** *Cardamine pratensis* pink, Apr-Jun, medium  
**Lesser stitchwort** *Stellaria graminea* white, May-Oct, tall  
**Ox-eye daisy** *Leucanthemum vulgare* white, Jun-Aug, medium  
**Ragged robin** *Lychnis flos-cuculi* pink, May-Jun, medium  
**Salad burnet** *Sanguisorba minor* red, May-Aug, medium  
**Tufted vetch** *Vicia cracca* blue-purple, Jun-Aug, tall  
**Yellow rattle** *Rhinanthus minor* yellow, May-Jun, medium

## Summer meadows

These do best on poor soils, otherwise coarser flowers and grasses tend to take over. Cut in late spring and autumn.

**Autumn hawkbit** *Leontodon autumnalis* yellow, Jul-Oct, med  
**Cat's ear** *Hypochoeris radicata* yellow, May-Jul, medium  
**Dropwort** *Filipendula vulgaris* white, May-Jul, medium  
**Field scabious** *Knautia arvensis* blue, nectar, May-Jun, tall  
**Goat's-beard** *Tragopogon pratensis* yellow, Jun-Jul, med.  
**Greater burnet** *Sanguisorba officinalis* red, Jun-Sep, tall  
**Kidney vetch** *Anthyllis vulneraria* yellow, Jun-Aug, medium

**Lady's bedstraw** *Galium verum* yellow, Jul-Sep, medium  
**Lesser knapweed** *Centaurea nigra* purple, Jul-Sep, medium  
**Meadow vetchling** *Lathyrus pratensis* yellow, Jun-Jul, tall  
**Red clover** *Trifolium pratense* pink, nectar, May-Sep, short  
**Sheep's sorrel** *Rumex acetosella* pink, seed, May-Aug, short  
**Small scabious** *Scabiosa columbaria* blue, Jul-Aug, short  
**Wild carrot** *Daucus carota* white, Jun-Aug, tall

## Woodland edge

These plants will do well in light shade close to trees or shrubs.

**Bugle** *Ajuga reptans* blue, nectar, May-Jul, short  
**Foxglove** *Digitalis purpurea* red-purple, nectar, Jul-Sep, tall  
**Monk's-hood** *Aconitum napellus* blue, Jul-Aug, short  
**Bluebell** *Scilla non-scripta* blue, Apr-Jun, short  
**Giant bellflower** *Campanula latifolia* blue, Jul-Aug, short  
**Red campion** *Silene dioica* pink, May-Jun, medium  
**Snowdrop** *Galanthus nivalis* white, Jan-Mar, short  
**Star-of-Bethlehem** *Ornithogalum umbellatum* white, Apr-Jun, short  
**Wood anemone** *Anemone nemorosa* white, Apr-May, short  
**White campion** *Silene latifolia* white, May-Oct, medium  
**Wild basil** *Clinopodium vulgare* purple, Jul-Sep, medium  
**Wild strawberry** *Fragaria vesca* white, May-Jun, short  
**Wood cranesbill** *Geranium sylvaticum* purple, Jun-Jul, med  
**Wood forget-me-not** *Myosotis sylvatica* blue, May-Jun, medium  
**Wood sage** *Teucrium scorodonia* green, Jul-Sep, medium  
**Yellow archangel** *Lamiastrum galeobdolon* yellow, May-Jul, med

## Key

Short - under 30cm,  
Medium - 30-60cm,  
Tall - Over 60 cm.