



Garden Clippings



Niagara College Greenhouse Centre Success Sheet No. 91

Wildflower Gardening

What Is a Wildflower Garden?

Many people think that a wildflower garden is simply a section of lawn that no one bothered to cut. Low in maintenance, wildflowers are hardy or native to their surroundings. This ensures beautiful plants that are adapted to local soil, water and climate.

Many gardeners plant wildflower gardens in areas in which nothing else will grow. Sometimes these areas are hard to reach or are out of the way. A wildflower garden will create an informal look that can brighten any property. Popular places to plant such gardens include tree lines, vacant lots, roadsides and steep hills.

Wildflower gardens can be a simple solution to a problem area or a low-maintenance garden for an informal planting. No matter what purpose a wildflower garden has, it is certain to be a beautiful addition to any garden.

What Does a Wildflower Garden Need?

Gardeners should consider conditions on their property. Even though wildflowers are very adaptable to extreme conditions, they are not “magical” and will not grow where nothing else has.

Determining the kind of soil in the intended spot helps. If the soil is a heavy clay, adding some sand will allow water to reach the roots of the plants. If the soil is too sandy, adding humus for water retention will be helpful.

Practices such as these will improve growing conditions for a healthy garden, but

as long as growth is occurring in the location, it should be able to support wildflowers.

Watering is also a must for any garden. Wildflowers are adapted to sunny conditions and can perform well without supplemental watering. However, supplemental watering will accelerate flower growth and create healthier plants, possibly meaning fewer insects and less disease.

How Is a Wildflower Garden Maintained?

The most attractive feature of a wildflower garden, other than the flowers, is its ability to maintain itself. Once seeds or seedlings are planted, they should be watered and left to grow on their own. To decrease competition for food and water, weeds that emerge can be pulled as plants grow.

When the seed heads have dropped in the fall, the garden should be mowed or cut to the ground. This ensures a fresh growing season the following year. When plants emerge in the spring, holes can be filled in with new seed or plants.

Gardeners should be creative and experiment with their gardens. By planting wildflowers in dull and unused places, gardeners can create an attractive garden that requires little care.

For more information, try these Websites:

www.grimsby-festival-arts.com/flower.html

www.ontarioflower.com/deciduous.htm

www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/for/for71/for71.htm

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