

WEALD MEADOWS INITIATIVE



7. WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN WILDFLOWER AND GRASS SEED (LOCAL PROVENANCE)

Action for valued grasslands, for now and for the future

WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN WILDFLOWER AND GRASS SEED (LOCAL PROVENANCE)

This information sheet provides information on choice of seed and further details about the Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI) harvesting operation. Once you have looked at grassland management and natural regeneration you may consider species introduction as the next step. Other information sheets provide details on the enhancement process but seed source should be considered early.....

WHY USE WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN WILDFLOWER (LOCAL PROVENANCE) SEED?

Wildflowers growing locally often develop genetic variations due to the specific conditions of the site such as aspect, climate, soils, pH, management regimes and geography. Seed from these plants is therefore ideal to use when creating or enhancing grassland in the same area. Local genetic variations improve disease resistance and may help to prevent extinction when conditions change, so it is vital to retain this genetic character if at all possible.

Natural regeneration is the ideal option. Natural regeneration supplemented by Weald Native Origin seed (WNOS) is the next best alternative.

Local seed harvesting also helps to support management costs of grasslands and the conservation of special sites. SSSI, SNCI and other important species-rich sites are the best sources of WNOS, especially if creation/enhancement is to be undertaken close to these sites.

The introduction of appropriate locally rare species should only be considered once the grassland is well established and it is recommended that you consult with the Weald Meadows Initiative, the County Wildlife Trust and Natural England if you are considering this.

WMI - WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN WILDFLOWER AND GRASS (WNOS) SPECIES

Weald Native Origin seed has been harvested from the Weald of Kent, East and West Sussex and Surrey since 1996 under the auspices of the Weald Meadows Initiative and is now collected, marketed and sold under a national Code of Practice devised by Plantlife and Flora Locale for collectors, growers and suppliers of native flora. The Code protects and promotes a responsible approach to wild plants and good practice for the collection, propagation, marketing and sale of seed. It also helps plant users choose the right plants from the appropriate place for their reintroduction into the natural environment.

The species available are selectively harvested from some of the most species-rich meadows in the area, including those designated as SSSIs and SNCIs. Species are harvested sympathetically, generally using a brush harvester, leaving the donor site unaffected and with a viable hay crop. The process only harvests a proportion of the ripe seed and is kind to insects. Since 1999 a small flower combine has also been used on selected sites.

The species available in Weald Native Origin Seed mixes are suited to neutral and acid grassland and the requirements of the recipient site are closely matched with the donor site to ensure the best conditions for successful growth.

Most of these species are only available within mixes, not as individual species. As a rule of thumb; most mixes contain approximately 24 species and the quantity of each species also varies. The mix will be cleaned and bagged. Small quantities of single species may be available, contact WMI for information on this.

The Weald Meadows Initiative is a public private partnership between the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit, Farming and Wildlife Group (FWAG) and Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd. It is supported by The Tubney Charitable Trust, The High Weald Landscape Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England and East Sussex County Council

**PLEASE NOTE IF YOU REQUIRE SEED YOU SHOULD APPROACH THE WMI IMMEDIATELY
on 01424 774668 or meadows@highwealdlandscapetrust.org
WE OPERATE ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVED/TARGETED BASIS (of suitable sites)**

WMI - WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN SEED (AN EXAMPLE OF SPECIES AVAILABLE WITHIN A MIX)

Wildflowers	Grasses, Rushes and Sedges
Agrimony	Bent, Velvet & Common
Betony	Cock's Foot
Bird's Foot Trefoil, Greater & Common	Crested Dog's Tail
Buttercup, Bulbous & Meadow	Fescue, Meadow
Cat's-ear, Common	Fescue, Red
Centaury, Common	Fescue, Squirrel-tail
Clover, Red	Fox Tail, Meadow
Hawk's-beard, Smooth	Heath grass
Hawkbit, Autumn & Rough	Meadow Grass, Rough
Knapweed, Black	Meadow Grass, Smooth
Mallow, Musk	Oat-grasss, Yellow
Mouse-ear, Common	Rush, various
Orchid, Common Spotted	Sedge, various
Oxeye Daisy	Sweet Vernal Grass
Pepper Saxifrage	Timothy Grass, Large Leaved
Pignut	
Platain, Ribwort	
Self Heal	
Sneezewort	
Sorrel, Common	
St John's-wort, spp	
Vetch, Tufted	
Vetchling, Meadow	
Woodrush, Field	
Yarrow	
Yellow Rattle (annual)	

WEALD NATIVE ORIGIN WILDFLOWER AND GRASS SEED PRICES (AS AT 2010/11) FOR CLEANED AND BAGGED SEED

Weald Native Origin Seed	£ per kg	£ per 50g
Native Origin Wildflower & Grass seed mixture (aprox 20/80 mix)	50.00	6.00
Native Origin single species - Yellow Rattle	82.00	10.00
Native Origin single species - Ox-eye Daisy	120.00	12.00
Native Origin single species - Devil's Bit Scabious	300.00	30.00
Native Origin single species Bird's Foot Trefoil and Greater Bird's Foot Trefoil	120.00	12.00
Native Origin single species - Knapweed	120.00	12.00
Small quantities of Betony, Dyers Greenweed, Pignut, Centuary, Tufted Vetch, Meadow Vetchling etc - prices on request		

Please note the following:

1. All species are subject to availability and should be ordered via WMI.
2. Prices do not include VAT, which is applicable.
3. Any cheques should be made payable to Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd.
Please note that it is the policy of the WMI that the agents, Agrifactors should receive payment within 30 days of invoicing.

OTHER SEED SOURCES

British native seed is the next best choice to Native Origin local provenance seed. Seed should be purchased from reputable companies who keep records of the locality of the origin of the seed and whose collection policies help to avoid characteristics such as prolonged flowering. Please see flora.locale.org for native suppliers.

Points to bear in mind are:

- avoid the use of improved or modified cultivars e.g. Bird's-foot Trefoil where upright growth and vigour offers a different microclimate to butterflies such as Common Blue and Green Hairstreak, etc;
- avoid off-the-shelf mixes containing regionally non-endemic plants such as Greater Burnet and Dropwort (often in "acid" or "heavy/wet/clay" mixes);
- avoid those mixes with poppies, cornflowers, etc for "early colour" as it is important to keep the sward short and prevent flowering in the first full season.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Having read through this information sheet, looked at your site, and considered seed supply, you may have other questions or need further advice before you can get started on enhancing your grassland. The other information sheets in this series, particularly **5. ENHANCING WILDFLOWER GRASSLANDS IN THE WEALD** will give further advice. WMI can help with information and advice and can point you towards other experts and seed suppliers. If you are a farmer considering creating a larger area of grassland, it would be advisable to speak to WMI or to an adviser at the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group who will be able to help and also refer you to related government agencies such as Natural England.

WEALD MEADOWS INITIATIVE

The Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI) aims to enable the traditional management of unimproved meadows and the successful establishment of new species-rich grasslands in the High and Low Weald. Recognising the need for wildflower management and creation to be financially viable, it proactively develops and markets added value grassland products.

It is a public private partnership between the High Weald AONB Unit, Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd, the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and landowners and managers.

AGRIFACTORS

Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd was incorporated in 1970 as an agricultural and horticultural merchant specialising in the supply of grass, clover, forage, fodder, vegetable and flower seeds to farmers, horticulturalists and amenity users in West Kent, East and West Sussex and Surrey. The knowledge built up since 1970, matching varieties and mixtures to soil type, location and specific climatic conditions within their trading area enable it to formulate and mix agricultural and amenity seeds to the users specific requirements. Its association with the High Weald AONB Unit, the Weald Meadows Initiative and FWAG since 1995 has developed into a worthwhile partnership enabling it to provide a seed source of known local provenance for Stewardship Schemes within the High Weald. Most of the people involved in the harvesting, drying, cleaning, mixing and despatch of this seed live locally, so that this activity supports the local community.

FWAG

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group is a national group led locally by farmers and local organisations. It provides the farming community with a source of independent confidential advice on the management and improvement of existing wildlife and landscape features whilst integrating environmentally responsible, cost effective methods and techniques supported by sources of grant aid and practical assistance.

PLUG SUPPLIERS

Mike Mullis – British Wildflowers 07932 683245 or mm.wfp@tesco.net

HIGH WEALD AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

The High Weald AONB is a historic landscape of rolling hills draped with small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. It was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983 to aid its protection and management. It covers 563 square miles at the heart of South East England. Wildflower grasslands are a valued feature of the High Weald AONB.

Natural England is also an extended partner of the WMI and may be able to offer help and advice

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