

GETTING YOUR SUPERBLOOM AUTUMN/WINTER READY

As the Summer season draws to a close, you may be wondering what to do to ensure your blooms survive Winter and re-appear next year. Here we have collected a few tips for you to test out in your own spaces:

WHEN TO MOW

We plan to cut down and mow all the dead stems and seed heads from October onwards. This gives the annuals time to produce and then drop their seeds on the ground. The climate at this time of year is cooler and generally the soil is damper, this gives seeds a greater chance of sticking into the soil. The action of mowing with a machine or even just walking over the land helps to scatter the seed over a wider area and push the seed into the moist ground.

WHAT TO DO WITH CUTTINGS

There are two options for the clippings. If you had a lot of grass in your Superbloom or plants you don't want such as brambles and nettles you should rake up the clippings and add them to the compost heap or take to the recycling centre. Leaving too much of this material on the surface could smother new seedlings and may alter your soil balance and condition by increasing the fertility. Remember, most meadow annuals prefer soils that are free draining and low in nutrients.

Alternatively, if you don't have a lot of clippings, you could shred all this material up with the mower and spread evenly and thinly on the ground. It will all naturally decompose, and the worms will help pull it down into the soil.

WHEN/HOW TO RESEED

The success of your meadow this summer should guide your reseed next spring. If your annuals were nicely mixed, plentiful, and produced lots of seeds heads then you might be tempted to do nothing and let the reseed happen naturally. This, after all is what happens in the fields and meadows of our beautiful countryside.

However, if your plot was a little sparse or didn't flower as you were hoping, you could give nature a helping hand and introduce some new seeds in March or April. At this stage you can choose what you like best to reseed with, perhaps poppies or cornflowers. Re-seeding can be tricky so plan ahead and get the ground prepared first by roughing up the soil and creating a rough, crumbly surface. Dig out any grass or plants that might swamp your annuals and do it all on nice damp cool day. Do not worry too much about disturbing any young seedlings that are growing from last year, they are tough and won't mind. When you're ready, mix your seed in a bucket with some dry sharp sand, or make seed bombs to throw over your plot! Rake everything over and then walk over it. Don't use a roller or a machine, just walk up and down all over your plot – be careful not to stomp or tramp too hard on the seeds though! Brush your boots off while still on the soil because the seed often sticks to your shoes. Keep an eye on the weather, if it rains a few days after seeding that's perfect, there's nothing more for you to do. But if it's dry and there is no rain forecast, then gently water the plot with a hose or watering can. At this stage it's best to stay off your plot to avoid disturbing the germination process. Stand back, make a cup of tea and wait for the seedlings to grow.