



NATIVE AMERICAN SEED

127 North 16th Street

Junction, Texas 76849

800-728-4043 sales 800-728-3943 fax

www.seedsource.com

PLANTING AND CARE OF NATIVE WILDFLOWERS AND GRASSES

SITE SELECTION

Select an area that is suitable for the type of seed you are planting. Take into consideration the soil type, sun exposure and the moisture needed to germinate and maintain that species. Adequate moisture is required for germination. By planting at the right time, natural rainfall can be taken advantage of.

WHEN TO PLANT

Cool season plants like most of the wildflowers germinate in the early fall when rainfall is most likely to occur. Best time to plant wildflowers is September and October, however germination can continue to occur through early spring in some cases.

Warm season plants such as most of the native grasses germinate and grow from spring to fall, then go dormant in the winter. Best time to plant the warm season grasses is when the *night time temperatures* are at 50 degrees for ten consecutive nights, or when the *soil temperature* is 65 degrees or above.

SITE PREPARATION AND PLANTING

You will get a higher rate of germination and healthier plants by sowing seed in a prepared seedbed. Good seed to soil contact is essential.

Native Wildflowers

Scalp any existing grasses and remove the clippings so the seeds can make contact with the soil. Rake the seeds lightly into the soil. Gently press soil on top of seeds. Be sure not to cover the seeds too deeply. A good rule of thumb for planting depth is no more than twice the diameter of the seed. Never plant wildflowers into nonnative winter grass or clovers.

Native Grasses

It is best to start with an area free of weeds when planting native grasses. Till the soil no deeper than 2 inches. Be careful not to till too deeply because this will stir up unwanted weed seeds that have been lying dormant. Remove debris from the area, rake

level, and smooth. Scatter the seed evenly across the area, rake in, then roll to press in less than half an inch deep. Eastern Gamagrass, because it is a much larger seed, should be planted 1 to 1 ½ inches deep in medium textured soils or a little deeper in lighter textured soils that may dry out faster. The goal is to place the seed just deep enough to stay in adequate moisture for a sufficient amount of time to allow germination to take place.

WEED CONTROL

In most cases, it is advisable to consider weed control in two phases - as part of site preparation prior to planting, and as an important component of the post-germination maintenance program. Before planting, remove existing weeds by pulling, tilling under, solarization or a combination of these things.

Once wildflowers and grasses have germinated, further weed control is usually necessary. If practical, pull or hoe all weeds as soon as they can be identified, or selectively cut weeds with a string trimmer. Be sure to remove weeds before they reseed. Weeds invariably appear after seeding, and controlling them is one of the most difficult problems in establishing grasses. Because weeds grow faster than your newly planted seedlings, you must control them or they will out compete your desired plants.

The detrimental effects of weeds include shading your seedlings and competing with them for moisture. One way to control weeds is to water and mow correctly. Watering too early or too late in the season and over watering are practices that encourage weeds to grow. Since many weeds are annuals, keeping them mowed off during the first year, you will have a strong effect on the future year's weed populations.

IDENTIFICATION TIP

Sprinkle a few seeds in a clay pot and keep by the house where you can water and watch grow. Use these seedlings for identification in your planted areas.

ESTABLISHMENT

All seeds need ample moisture to germinate and to develop into healthy seedlings and plants.

Native Wildflowers

If little to no rainfall, you can remain patient until rainfall occurs. That's the benefit of using *native* wildflowers! If your patience runs thin, you may water using the Watering Guidelines below. Caution: If you begin watering, do not allow your new seedlings to dry out!

Native Grasses

Most native grasses are warm season perennials. Take advantage of spring rains, and plant during this time to aid large planted areas that are difficult to water. For quickest establishment of lawn grasses use watering guidelines below.

WATERING GUIDELINES

For germination, water lightly and frequently to keep top of soil constantly moist. Depending upon weather conditions, you may be initially watering several times per day. After seeds have sprouted and seedlings are approximately 1" in height, give less frequent but deeper and more lengthy watering. This allows for healthy establishment of the root systems of your new plants. Once native plants are established, supplemental water is not required, though they will appreciate a drink during drought conditions.

BE PATIENT

Patience is important. Annuals are usually the quickest to germinate, grow and bloom. Perennials take more time getting established. Native grasses and wildflowers are eternal, not instant! Much energy is spent in growing deep, strong roots the first few years, just like a good family!