



**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/plant-wildflowers-for-color>

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Wildflowers bring bursts of color to home landscapes

K-State horticulture expert suggests planting a blend of grasses and wildflowers

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Wildflowers offer variety and color to a home landscape. In addition to eye appeal, they can survive in soils containing a wide range of chemistry pH and with varying numbers of sunny days, adding variety to garden areas.

To establish a wildflower area, Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini recommends using a regional seed blend from Sharp Brothers, Stock Seed or Wildseed Farms.

“It is better to choose a blend of grasses and wildflowers rather than a single species,” Domenghini said.

When building a wildflower area, first remove existing vegetation to help wildflowers take root and grow.

Domenghini recommends:

- Control perennial weeds by using a product containing glyphosate.
- Before planting, adjust pH and fertilize according to results of a soil test.
- Eradicate weeds. This can be done through cultivation, occultation or chemical methods, if necessary.
- The seedbed should be firm so that the boot heel sinks in no more than ½ inch. The goal is good seed/soil contact.
- Mix seed with damp sand (4:1 sand/seed) for more uniform coverage with a drop seeder or whirlybird spreader.
- Rake seed in about ¼ inch deep. It is best if the seedbed is firmed up by using a roller or driving over the area with a riding lawn mower. Don’t mulch.
- Keep seed moist while the seed is germinating (3-4 times per week, if possible). Slowly back off watering as plants develop.

“Warm-season grasses and most prairie flowers should be seeded between April 1 and May 15,” Domenghini said. “During the first year of establishment, regularly monitor and control the weed re-growth.”

Seeds will germinate best when the soil temperature is at least 60 degrees F, Domenghini said. Soil thermometers are available in most garden centers, hardware stores and auto stores.

“Hand weeding can help but must be done with care to avoid uprooting small prairie flowers. Mow as high as possible to help control fast growing weeds while preserving most of the foliage on the prairie flower,” Domenghini said.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly [Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to [view online](#) or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Domenghini at cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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