



# Gardening with Wildflowers

Nancy Lowe



# Gardening with Wildflowers

Wildflower benefits and  
challenges

1. Veg Garden
2. Beds and Borders
3. Meadow Gardens



# Wildflowers

Growing with  
wildflowers is rewarding  
but presents certain  
challenges to be worked  
with carefully



# Wildlife Benefits



- Native plants are vital to insect larvae
- While adult insects can feed from non-natives, larvae often rely on wildflowers and other native plants





# Wildlife Benefits



GARDENS =

- Plant density
- Plant diversity
- Structural diversity





# Challenges

Wild plants means wild behaviour:

- Spreading roots
- Creeping/smothering habit
- Stoloniferous plants





# Challenges

- Many set seed very successfully
- Some do so extremely quickly





# Challenges

## EXTREME CAUTION

- Very problematic plants = those with multiple challenging behaviours



Green Alkanet

Seeding and deep rooted

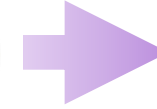
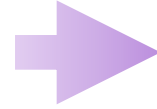
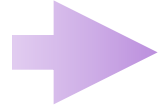


Cinqfoil

Spreading and deep rooted



# Wildness Spectrum



**RIGOROUSLY  
ORDERED**

Vegetable beds,  
with e.g. crop  
rotation and  
detailed plans

**NEAT AND  
ORGANISED**

Mixed borders,  
lawn, patio pots,  
with some choice  
annuals/biennials

**PART  
MANAGED:**  
Meadow areas,  
woodland  
garden, limited  
control

**WILD**

Nettle patches,  
scrub, naturally  
regenerating  
trees. Nature  
takes lead



# 1. Veg Garden

Integrating *sun-loving annual* plants into the vegetable patch





# Veg Garden Wildflowers



Borage



Calendula

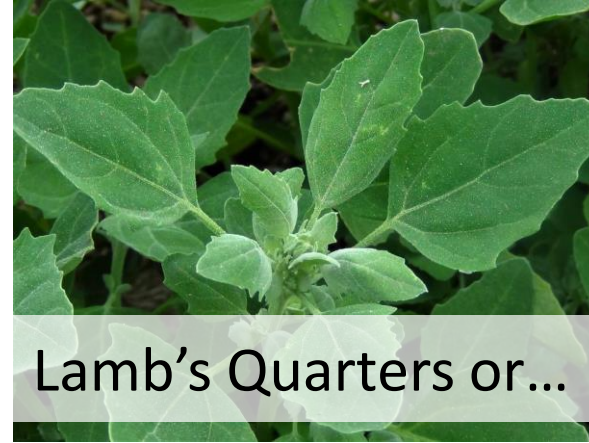
- Beneficial annuals
- Easy to weed out



Chamomile



Lamb's Lettuce



Lamb's Quarters or...



...Fat Hen

# Self-growing wildflower salad



Foraged Salad

- Borage
- Marigold/Calendula
- Fat Hen/Lamb's quarters
- Lamb's lettuce



## 2. Beds and Borders

Including '*well behaved*' plants in beds and borders





# Traditional Garden Borders



## SELF SEEDERS

- Self seeders can be used if easy to weed out
- Choose short-lived varieties





# Traditional Garden Borders



## WELL-BEHAVED PERENNIAL PLANTS

- Clumping
- Slow spreading
- Relatively easy to dig out





# Woodland Inspired Borders

SPRING

- Plant spring flowers directly beneath trees and shrubs, leaving more open areas for taller summer flowers
- Allow plants to naturalise – a carpet of colour





# Woodland Inspired Borders

LATE SPRING AND SUMMER  
Drifts of part shade-loving natives  
in gaps between shrubs and trees







Box



Spindle



Broom

## Native shrubs

For colour and  
structure  
all year round



Guelder Rose



Privet



Dogwood



### 3. Meadow Gardens

Integrating *sun-loving*  
or *shade loving*  
grassland plants into the  
garden





# Flowering lawns

Grow low growing flowers through cut grass





# Flowering lawns

Support Common Blue butterflies  
with pea family wildflowers



Birdsfoot Trefoil



Black medick



White Clover



# Designing with Meadows

Lawns grown long



Create mown buffers against beds  
Match meadow shape to lawn shape



# Designing with Meadows

Meadows patches  
and mown paths



Divide up a large area of grass into  
meadow 'beds', using mown paths  
Create larger mown areas for seating,  
a table or space for games



# Traditional Meadow Plants



Wild Carrot



Lady's Bedstraw

- Mixed perennial wildflowers commonly found growing through grass



Yarrow



Birdsfoot Trefoil



Oxeye Daisy



Knappweed



# Curated Meadows

- Playing with colour schemes:  
*Fresh and bright*





# Curated Meadows

- Playing with colour schemes:  
*Harmonious colours*



Musk Mallow



Meadow Cranesbill



Field Scabious



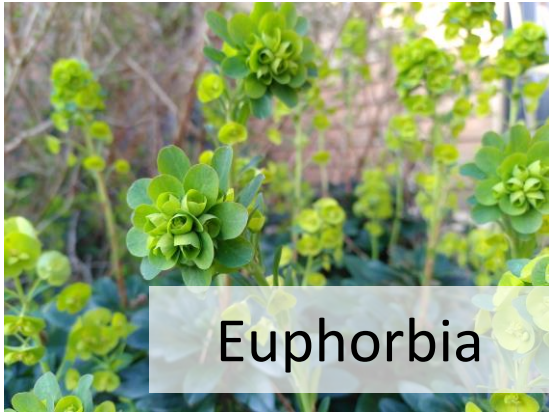


Greater Periwinkle

# The Wild Wood Garden

SPRING

Allow self seeding or creeping natives to naturalise



Euphorbia



Sweet Woodruff



Primrose



Daffodil



Bluebell



Snowdrop





Gladwyn Iris



Wood Betony



Foxglove



Columbine



Wood Cranesbill



Mint

# The Wild Wood Garden

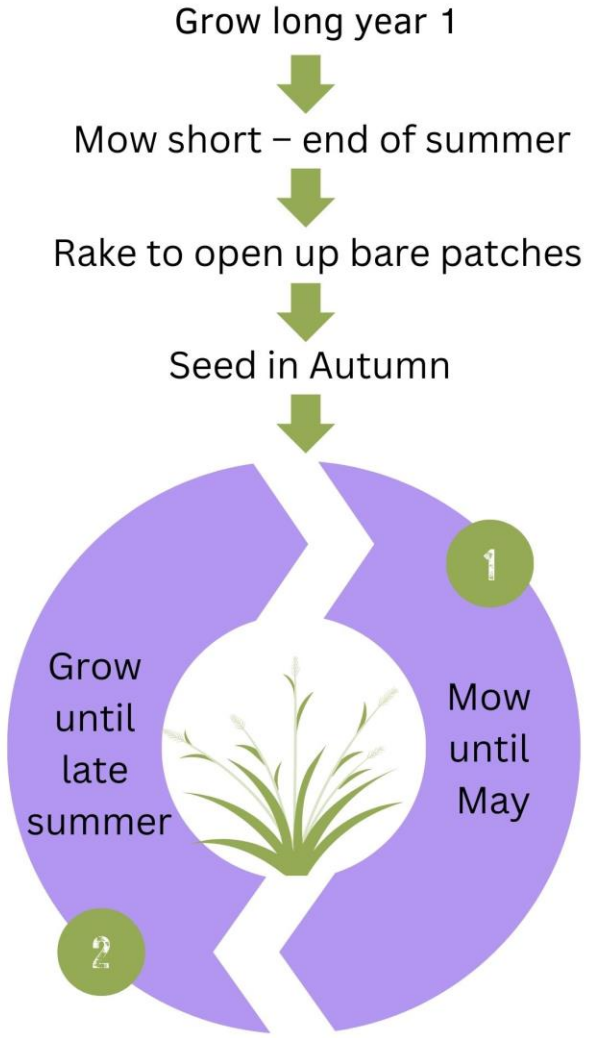
LATE SPRING AND SUMMER  
Allow self seeding and  
creeping plants to naturalise



Dog rose



# Sowing New Meadow



# Summer meadow Creation





## Plug Planting Meadow

Grow long year 1



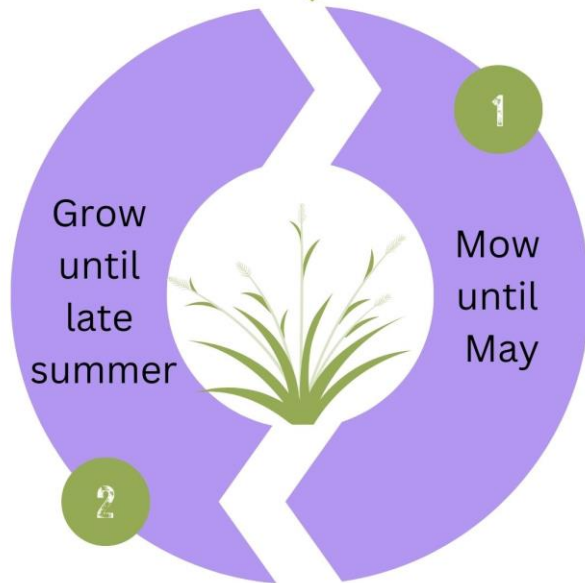
Mow short – end of summer



Rake to open up bare patches



Plugs in Autumn



## Summer meadow Creation





# For more help or ideas

- **Join** - Shropshire Nature Gardens Club
- **Get in touch** - Gardening or Design 1:1
- **Volunteer** – Garden with me each month
- **Find out more** [www.thenaturalgardener.org.uk](http://www.thenaturalgardener.org.uk)

