

Thornham Jubilee Meadow



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1. Introduction

[Norfolk Rivers Trust](#) (NRT) has been working to enhance and restore meadows and wildflower habitats on behalf of the [WWF and Air Wick partnership](#) project, “Let’s Bring Nature Back.” To achieve this end, NRT has been supporting individuals, charities and communities through providing expert advice and funding for native wildflower and grassland seed mixes. By actively engaging with communities, a lasting legacy and relationship between people and nature can be forged.

Thornham Jubilee Meadow, a formerly arable field, is undergoing a transformation into a sanctuary for both wildlife and people. Through NRT’s support, 2.8ha of perennial wildflower seed has been sown to enhance the meadow’s diversity, contributing to over 4ha of newly sown wildflower meadow in total. As well as creating a space for the local community to enjoy, it will also boost biodiversity and lock in carbon by altering land management practices.

The perennial seed mix was hand-picked and locally sourced by a specialist contractor to spread on the existing grassland.



Figure 1. A thriving wildflower meadow will bring a myriad of wildlife for all to enjoy.



Figure 2. Wildflower diversity can be increased through a variety of methods.

Collaborative working

The creation of a wildflower meadow at Thornham Jubilee Meadow is part of a wider project that has received funds from the Defra Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) Programme. This is operated by Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape, which provides support to farmers and land managers within the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, formally known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Defra programme supports projects that benefit climate, nature, people and place within protected landscapes in England.

FiPL has provided Thornham Jubilee Meadow with further funding for: wildflower seed and land preparation ahead of sowing, local expertise, and hedgerow planting and restoration. The FiPL project has also enhanced access to the site, with new gates and boundary fencing installed between the meadow and the A149 Coast Road to improve safety.

FiPL has also provided funding towards interpretation boards to engage the public with the landscape.

2. The Reason for Spreading Wildflower Seeds

Spreading wildflower seed is a highly effective method for enhancing grassland. It can:

- Reintroduce native species lost from an area; thereby providing habitat and food for a greater variety of native insects and pollinators. According to WWF, “one acre of wildflower meadow can contain 3 million flowers...enough to support nearly 96,000 honey bees per day.”
- Provide a more complex rooting system than a less diverse grassland. Importantly, this can break up soil compaction, leading to improved water infiltration and reduced flood risk.
- Increase mental health and wellbeing benefits. An improved space for community gatherings and enjoyment can bring people together, build connections and reduce loneliness.

3. The Cycle of Meadow Creation

It can take up to four years to establish a new meadow and there are some key factors to consider:

- Annuals and/or perennials - Annual wildflower species include the traditional brightly coloured cornflowers and poppies, which have an immediate visual impression and typically flower for a few months before spreading the seeds and dying. Perennial species can take longer to establish and usually appear more “weed-like”, but they are present all-year round and the same plant regrows each year. Perennials are great for soils and provide habitat and food for longer.
- Planting timeframe - It is usually best to sow in early spring or late autumn to avoid the wettest and driest times of the year.
- Sowing method - Seed establishment can be aided by ‘scarifying’, or roughing up, the ground first to expose bare patches of soil for the seed. This can be done using a tractor and machinery, or using livestock to graze other vegetation down and using a hand rake.
- Aftercare - Grazing and/or cutting of meadows is encouraged to generate better root growth, especially for perennial plants. Gentle grazing would be ideal for future management plans.

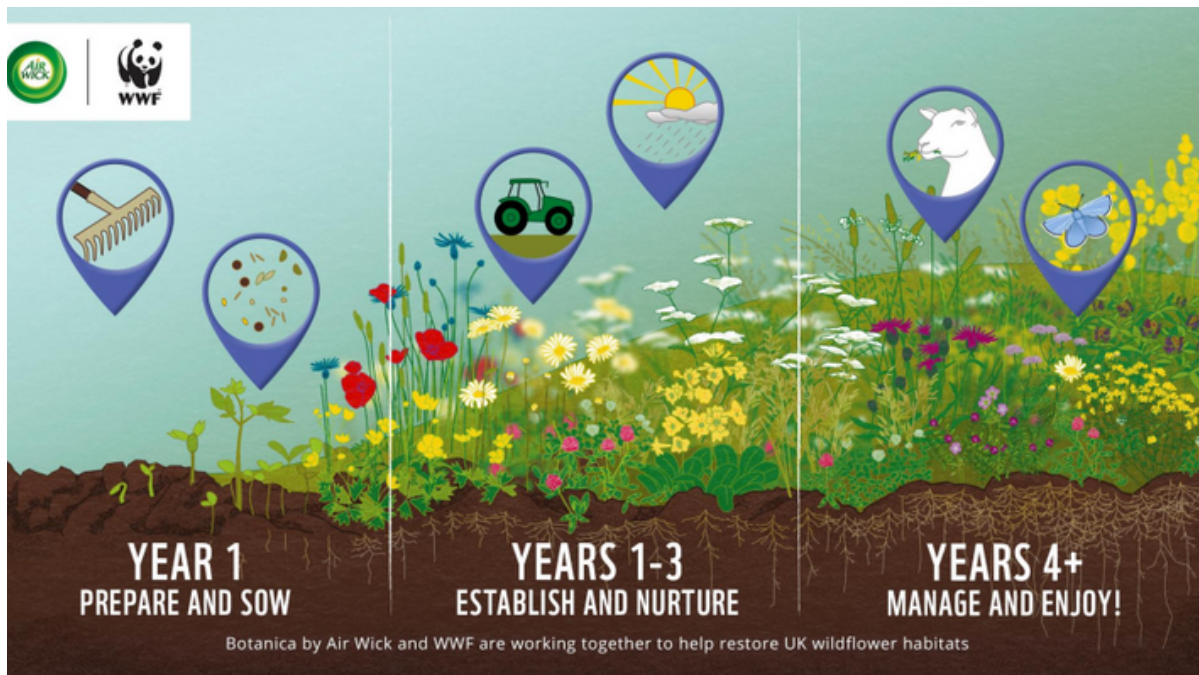


Figure 3. The cycle of a wildflower meadow by Air Wick/WWF.

4. A quote from Thornham community

“I enjoy walking in the field and will delight in a wildflower meadow and a chance to experience seasonal changes.”

Funding Statement

This work was made possible through the generous support of the Air Wick and WWF partnership. The funding provides essential training, resources and opportunities for communities and wildflower conservation efforts across Norfolk. With thanks to the community of Thornham and Thornham United Charities for their part in bringing nature back.