

What to expect if you stop mowing your lawn

All lawns are not made equal so if you want to know what your uncut grass will look like in a few months' time, first decide what kind of lawn you've got now.

Type 1: A hardwearing lawn with a mixture of tough grasses and some 'weeds'

Type 2: An old lawn which has never seen any weedkiller and goes wild while you're on holiday

Type 3: A lawn with very few weeds – you've probably used weedkiller and fed your grass for years

Type 4: A lawn with very short grass that looks like one of the greens at a golf club

Type 5: A lawn which contains more moss than grass in a shady area of your garden

If you've got a type 1 or type 2 lawn, you're in luck. If you simply stop mowing, the wildflowers already present should slowly take over. You've probably noticed they tend to do that anyway! If you stop mowing, the variety of wildflowers should increase even if you nothing. Seeds will blow in on the wind or be introduced by insects and birds.



If you've got a type 3 or a type 4 lawn, you'll have to do some work to introduce wildflowers into your unmown section of lawn because you've almost certainly killed off any that were trying to grow. If your type 3 lawn contains lots of tough rye grass it will be harder to establish wildflowers than in a lawn which comprises fine slow growing grasses. Rye grass grows very rapidly and can outcompete many wildflowers. On the plus side, if grass is left uncut it develops seed heads which can look very attractive especially if the lawn contains a mix of different grasses.

What about type 5 lawns in shady areas that contain a lot of moss? In truth, you are at the mercy of the weather and the type of soil you've got. If the soil dries out quickly as winter comes to an end or if spring and summer are drier than usual, the moss will die off and the grass should grow back (unless there's a drought). You could try introducing plants into the area before the grass takes over e.g. primroses would look wonderful and once a few plants are established will spread themselves freely. Choose plants that thrive in shade.



A typical mix of common wildflowers in uncut grass

How to manage your new mini meadow

Most wildflowers will have set seed by the end of August. Like meadows in the countryside, your mini meadow will benefit from being cut in late summer or early autumn. You will be able to see when seed has been produced.

Don't feed your wild patch of lawn. In the main, wildflowers don't like rich soil.

If you haven't got as many different species of flower as you'd like, you can introduce some. You can plant bulbs in the autumn or use plugs plants in the following spring. If you plant both, you'll have colour and nectar for insects from early spring into the autumn.

You can also try scattering wildflower seeds into the patch after you've cut it in the autumn. Sprinkle the seeds fairly liberally – mixing them with some horticultural sand is a good idea.

There's usually no need to plant buttercups, daisies and dandelions - they will find you!

Bulbs for naturalising in lawns

Wild or miniature daffodils
Snake's head fritillary
Crocuses
Snowdrops
Scillas
Chionodoxa
English bluebells

Easy to grow plants to enhance your meadow

Clover (white, pink and red varieties)
Bird's foot trefoil
Primroses
Dog violets
White and red campion
Cowslips
Yarrow
Self Heal
Speedwell
Common orchids
Meadow cranesbill
Musk mallow
Oxeye daisy
Field scabious
Cranesbill
Yellow rattle

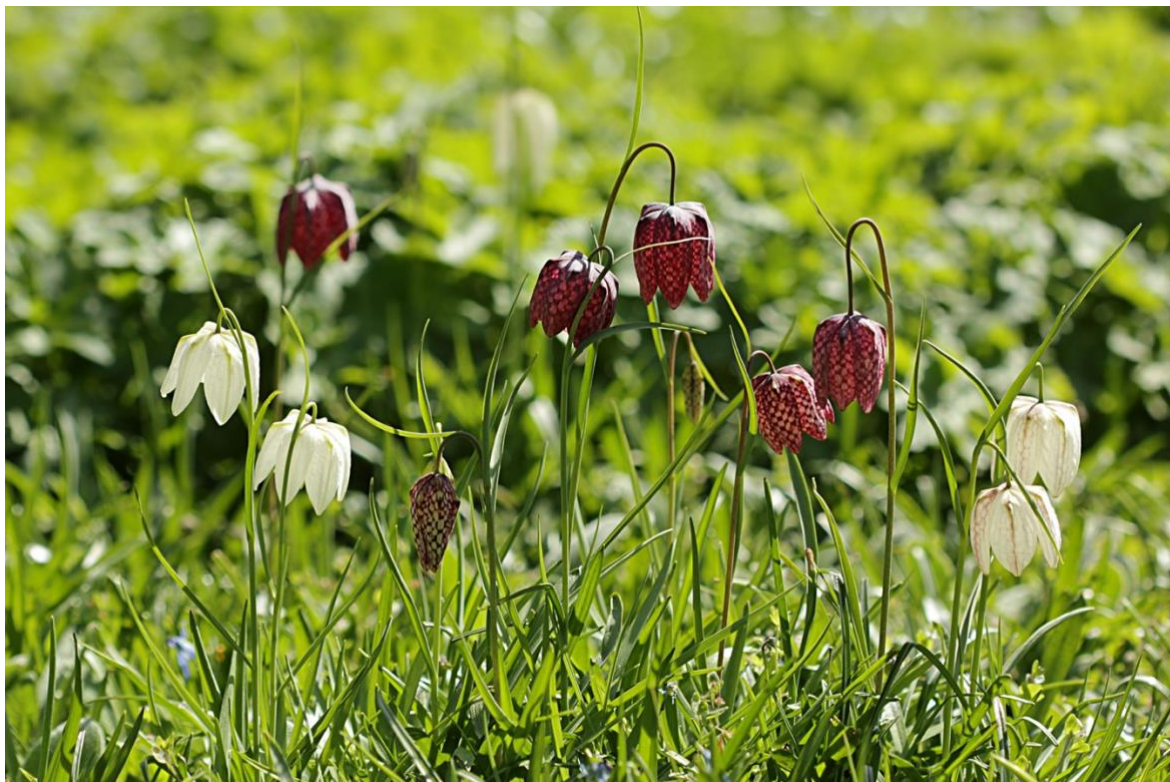
Those in italics will grow in partial shade. Yellow rattle is great for suppressing the growth of strong grasses but may take a while to work.

For more information about bulbs, see

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?PID=150>

For more information about introducing wildflowers into your grass, go to

<https://www.wildflowerlawnsandmeadows.com/>



Fritillaries in a lawn - despite the exotic appearance, they are very easy to grow

Activities

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/activities/let-it-grow/>

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/>

https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/wildflower_garden/growing_wild_flowers_with_children/

<https://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/activities>

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/get-involved/gardening-for-bugs/>

Leave your garden wild



www.wildlifewatch.org.uk