

# Wildflower Strip Planning Checklist

This checklist will guide you through every step of planning, planting, and maintaining a successful wildflower strip to support pollinators on your farm or garden.

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## 1. Site Planning and Preparation

- ☐ **Choose the Right Location**
    - Select an area that receives at least 6 hours of sunlight per day.
    - Consider placing the strip along field edges, between crops, or in unused land.
  - ☐ **Determine Size**
    - Decide on the length and width of your wildflower strip based on available space.
  - ☐ **Soil Testing**
    - Conduct a soil test to check pH, fertility, and drainage.
    - Consider amending soil if necessary based on test results.
  - ☐ **Clear Existing Vegetation**
    - Remove weeds and grass using non-chemical methods like mowing, tilling, or solarization.
  - ☐ **Weed Control**
    - Use mulch or cardboard to suppress weeds before planting.
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## 2. Plant Selection

- ☐ **Choose Native Species**
    - Research native wildflowers suited for your USDA Hardiness Zone and local climate.
  - ☐ **Select a Variety of Bloom Times**
    - Early bloomers: e.g., Crocus, Dandelion
    - Mid-season bloomers: e.g., Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower
    - Late bloomers: e.g., Goldenrod, Aster
  - ☐ **Pollinator Preferences**
    - Select plants that attract specific pollinators in your region (bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, etc.).
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## 3. Site Preparation

- ☐ **Loosen Soil**
    - Loosen soil to a depth of 2-3 inches to allow seeds to penetrate.
  - ☐ **Create Seed Beds**
    - Rake the soil lightly to create a smooth, even seed bed.
  - ☐ **Add Compost or Organic Matter (Optional)**
    - Add compost if soil fertility is low, but avoid excessive fertilization.
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#### 4. Planting the Wildflower Strip

- ☐ **Seed Mix**
    - Use a commercial native wildflower seed mix or create your own.
    - Mix seeds with sand for even distribution.
  - ☐ **Sowing Method**
    - Broadcast seeds evenly over the soil, ensuring good seed-to-soil contact.
  - ☐ **Covering Seeds**
    - Lightly rake or press seeds into the soil using a roller to ensure good seed-to-soil contact.
  - ☐ **Watering**
    - Water gently to moisten the soil without washing seeds away.
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#### 5. Maintenance and Care

- ☐ **Monitor for Germination**
  - Keep the area consistently moist until seeds germinate (typically 2–3 weeks).
- ☐ **Weed Regularly**
  - Remove any invasive plants that may outcompete your wildflowers.
- ☐ **Watering**
  - Water the wildflower strip during dry spells, especially in the first growing season.
- ☐ **Mowing**
  - After the first growing season, mow once per year to prevent the growth of shrubs and small trees.
- ☐ **Check for Pollinators**
  - Regularly observe the presence of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators to assess the success of your strip.

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## 6. Long-Term Management

- ☐ **Evaluate Plant Health**
  - Check for any signs of disease or stress in plants.
  - Replace any plants that are not thriving.
- ☐ **Monitor Pollinator Activity**
  - Track the number and variety of pollinators visiting your strip.
- ☐ **Adjust as Needed**
  - Consider adjusting your plant mix or layout if pollinator activity is low or if the strip isn't thriving.

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## Additional Resources:

- Research local pollinator species and the plants they prefer.
- Look into government or non-profit programs that offer grants or incentives for creating pollinator habitats (e.g., USDA's Conservation Reserve Program).

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## Downloadable PDF:

For a printable version of this checklist, download the **Wildflower Strip Planning Checklist** and start creating your pollinator habitat today!

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