

Celebrating Ireland's Meadows

Meadows are one of Ireland's most important habitats. They support a huge number of species above ground and in the soil. In summer, they can contain over 500 flowers/m², typically a knee-high mix of wildflowers and soft grasses. They are usually managed with light grazing and mowing with little, if any, fertilizer input.

In the last few decades these fragile habitats have been disappearing fast. Protecting, managing, and restoring meadows are among the best ways you can help biodiversity.

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| 1 Yellow-rattle | 10 Knapweed |
| 2 Selfheal | 11 Quaking grass |
| 3 Lady's Bedstraw | A Field Grasshopper |
| 4 Ragged-Robin | B Latticed Heath |
| 5 Sweet Vernal-grass | C Worm |
| 6 Meadowsweet | D Small Copper |
| 7 Crested Dog's-tail | E Six-spot Burnet moth |
| 8 Red Clover | F Grazing animals |
| 9 Bird's-foot-trefoil | G Swallows |



Why are meadows important?

For Biodiversity

A typical meadow can support thousands of different species including a vast array of bees, hoverflies, beetles, spiders, grasshoppers, butterflies, moths and worms. Pollinators are in decline because of a loss of habitats like meadows which contain the native wildflowers they need to survive. Well structured, healthy soils help with flood prevention and carbon sequestration. Meadows can store 500% more carbon than fields of pure grass.

For Farms

They provide free, organic pest control. Meadows are a habitat for insects who feed on crop pests. They produce herbage rich in minerals and amino acids for livestock. They can be a potential income stream as a source of native, local provenance wildflower seed to restore degraded meadows in your local area.

How should I manage my meadow?

Many farms have meadows that they have maintained for decades, sometimes unaware of their enormous biodiversity value. These are vital habitats, regardless of how small.

- If you already have a meadow on your land, protect it.
- Meadows are fragile habitats and are very sensitive to changes. They can be easily lost or damaged by adding nutrients or lime. Manage your meadow carefully, cut and remove the grass each July/August.

We want to do more to celebrate this important habitat on Irish farms. Do you have a field that looks like this? Tell us about it at: pollinators@biodiversityireland.ie



Biodiversity hotspot:
species-rich meadow,
managed for hay