

SOWING YOUR SUPERBLOOM SEEDS

If you are one of the Superbloom project's registered schools, the seeds you've been provided with are intended to be sown directly into your beds or containers outdoors. However, you may want to give students the learning experience of growing a few of the Superbloom seeds (or additional seeds you may have bought) in trays indoors for later planting out, so we've provided step-by-step instructions to cover this in the main Garden Manual.

SOWING TIMES AND CONDITIONS

When?

Sowing during March to May always gives the most reliable results. If you can't sow before early June, you can still get a good result but expect a much later flowering.

Superbloom Schools:

To ensure that your school's Superbloom garden mirrors the flowering time and colour changes taking place in the Tower of London's moat during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the seeds you've been provided with must be sown during March.

Where?

An open, sunny location not overshadowed by trees or buildings is best for annuals. If sown in shade, growth will be patchy and your flowers will be smaller. They will grow happily in average, free-draining soils.

Refer to the advice provided in the main Garden Manual for choosing the best site for your garden and for testing your soil.

If you're planning to sow your garden in pots, they will need to be watered more regularly through the spring because pots don't retain moisture as well as the soil in a bed does.

GROUND PREPARATION

Clearing weeds

Make sure you have a very clean seed bed or container before sowing. This means removing all visible weeds, especially grass.

Preparing the soil

For flowerbeds, the ground needs cultivating (breaking up). Keep this cultivation as shallow as possible, rake just enough to get a surface texture that is level and looks a bit like breadcrumbs. Sow your seeds as soon as you can once the ground is ready – if you wait too long weed seeds will move in before your flowers do!

If you need to buy soil for your garden, any general-purpose compost from a garden centre will be fine - it doesn't matter if it's peat free or not.

Sowing the seed mix

Most seeds can be sown quite successfully and quickly by hand, either one seed at a time in plotted rows or patterns (good for container planting), or by scattering.

Scatter method:

1. Mix your seeds thoroughly with a dry bulking material, such as clean dry sand.
2. Divide the whole amount into two or three separate pots or buckets.
3. Scatter one portion of the mixed seed and spreader horizontally over the whole area.
4. Then take the next portion and repeat but scatter vertically. This allows you to put a little more or a little less on areas which need it.
5. The last portion of seed mixture allows you to fill in any obvious gaps.
6. Firm the seeds down. Do not rake the seed into the ground as this will stop many species from germinating. Instead use the back of a spade, or even the bottom of your shoes, to firm the seeds into the soil after sowing.
7. Water in the seeds.

The seedbed should not need watering before seedlings show, if you sowed them in March. If you sowed really late, or there is a prolonged dry period just after sowing, then a couple of thorough soakings can speed things up.

In normal weather conditions, you should see the first signs of germination in 7-10 days. Growth can be very fast after this - your flowers may start appearing as early as 6 weeks after sowing!

SOWING SEEDS DIRECT - SCATTER METHOD



YOU WILL NEED:



Suitable seeds



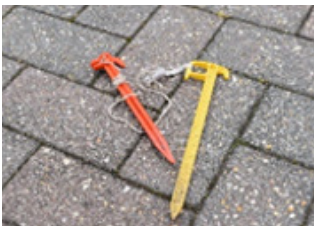
Plant labels + pencil



Hoe



Watering can



Gardening line

INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Weed and level the soil ready for sowing.



2. If necessary, mark out the planting area using a gardening line or hoe.



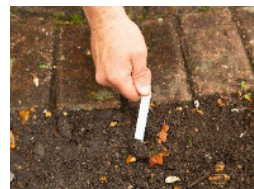
3. Sow the seeds liberally or according to the instructions on the packet.



4. Rake over the area to lightly cover the seeds.



5. Water in the seeds.



6. Label the area in which seeds sown.



7. Clean the tools.



8. Put the tools away.

SOWING SEEDS DIRECT - ROW METHOD



YOU WILL NEED:



Seeds



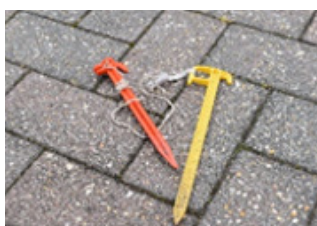
Trowel



Kneeler



Plant labels + pencil



Gardening line



Watering can



Hoe

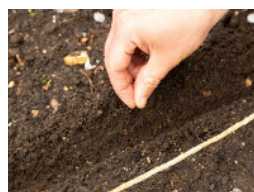
INSTRUCTIONS:



1. Create a line using gardening line.



2. Make a shallow trench with a hoe or trowel.



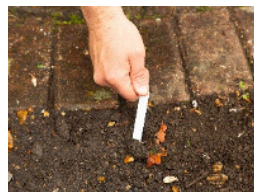
3. Place the seeds in a line along the trench (check the seed packet for spacing).



4. Lightly cover the seeds with soil.



5. Water in the seeds.



6. Put a label at the end of each line of seeds with the plant name on.



7. Thin out seedlings when growth shows.

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IMPORTANT

Superbloom Schools:

The Superbloom seeds you've been provided with should NOT be given plant food. Just give them water as required.