

HOW TO CREATE A BEE LAWN



WHAT IS A BEE LAWN?

Urban habitat is crucial for pollinator survival and currently traditional lawns or turf dominate the urban environment. Traditional lawns provide no food for pollinators. A bee lawn is a flowering carpet of low growing fescues and flowering plants with the appearance of a traditional lawn that will stay low, require very little mowing, take heavy foot traffic, and is drought tolerant.

FOR EXISTING LAWNS:

In Early Spring:

- Mow or scalp existing lawn very low to 1".
- Over seed with White Dutch Clover, Self-Heal, and Thyme.
- Cover lightly with straw or if necessary (sloped areas) with a straw erosion blanket and water well.
- Keep watered daily until germination occurs – then water weekly until established.
- After establishment for first season, water during dry spells.

FOR NEW LAWNS:

- Kill existing vegetation (non chemical methods preferred).
- Till or otherwise loosen soil.
- Seed with seed mix below.
- Cover lightly with straw or if necessary (sloped areas) with a straw erosion blanket and water well.
- Keep watered daily until germination occurs – then water weekly until established.
- After establishment for first season, water during dry spells.

STANDARD SEED MIX:

- Fescue grass such as Low-Mow fescue, chewings fescue, hard fescue and creeping red fescue
- White Dutch Clover (*Trifolium repens*)
- Self Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*)
- Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*)

PREP & MAINTENANCE:

- Mix seed with an organic fertilizer such as Sustane or Milorganite (10 lbs Sustane / 1000 sf)
- Water daily for 2 weeks, if no rain. After germination, no additional water or fertilizer needed (unless unusual dry spell).
- Mow ONLY when needed. Mow at 3" or higher infrequently to encourage flowers. Avoid mowing when flowering to attain as much forage as possible. Avoid mowing in early spring until pollinators emerge, and after September when pollinators are nesting for winter.
- Over-seeding in subsequent seasons may be necessary to achieve desired flower/grass ratio.

SOURCES:

- Self Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) 3.6 oz (7.5 Tbs) / 1000 sf, www.silverfallsseed.com
- Creeping Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) 1 oz. (2 Tbs) / 1000 sf, www.outsidepride.com
- White Dutch Clover (*Trifolium repens*) 3.2 oz (7 Tbs) / 1000 sf, www.houlesfarmgardenpet.com
- Fine Fescue 4 lbs / 1000 sf, available at garden centers

~Special Thanks to Ian Lane of the University of Minnesota Bee Lab~



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