

Pasture Painting How-To

beautify and activate passive green spaces
and grow food for bees

no digging required

v a c a n t



v i b r a n t



Pasture Paintings are community designed, geometric plantings that make public spaces more productive for bees & other pollinators

They employ geometries, colour, duration, orientation & biology

Materials:

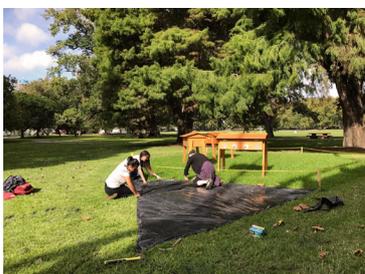
Organic, untreated seeds **Black Polythene sheet**
Microbes & minerals **Eco Tube 19mm diameter**
(see back of sheet) **Ground Staples 130mm**
can be found at Bunnings

1. Find a place with plenty of sun and decide on a shape. Think about the easiness of mowing around it. You could have a number of shapes within one Pasture Painting, in which each shape would house a different type of plant
2. Select plants based on the colours you would like and the heights you want the plants to grow to. Research how long each plant will take to produce flowers to help you determine what months of the year your pasture painting will produce bee food. Sketch your design
3. Lay out your design on the ground with lengths of tube. You can use string as a measuring guide
4. Use the string to make sure the tube outlines are straight before pinning them down with a number of ground staples
5. Cut and fit black plastic sheeting over the shape. Cut the sheet just large enough to tuck it under the tubing. Repin the ground staples
6. Depending on the time of year, it will take the sun around 3-6 weeks to cook the grass. When your

patch is brown, remove the plastic and cut the grass back as hard as you can using a weedeater

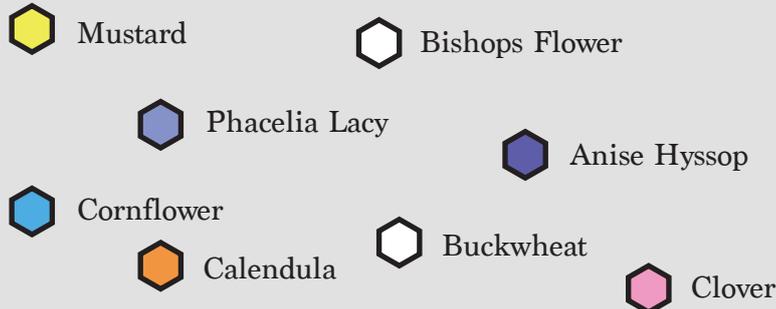
7. Wet the ground before you lay wet cardboard (with no cello tape on it) onto your shape. Water is a conduit which allows microbes and minerals to mix with each other. You don't want a dry patch as water will not travel through a layer that is dry. Make sure there are NO gaps between the cardboard as grass will find the sunlight and grow through your sheet mulch, competing with your seedlings
8. Place 3-5cm of organic topsoil mixed with compost onto your cardboard-layered prepared ground. If this soil is not full of microbes inoculate it with minerals and microbes. See the back of this sheet to see how
9. Scatter your seeds and cover with only a little earth or seed raising mix and water them. They need to feel the sun
10. Make sure your ground is wet and stays moist for the first 10 days of the seeds life - but not sodden.

Watch the bees find your Pasture Painting as it begins to produce flowers!



Flowers we suggest

Relative height



**These can be planted year-round in Auckland.
Good planting times are April-May-June &
August-September-October**

**Kings Seeds & Koanga
Institute are great suppliers.
Always ask for organic,
untreated seeds everywhere
you buy seeds.**

**Always inoculate your
seeds with mycorrhizal fungi,
which help your plants
source water over the
summer months**



Ways to get minerals and microbes onto your seeds or into your soil

Fill a bucket with plenty of water. Then to 'bring it to life' you can stir in a small amount of:

Worm juice

Worm castings

**A cap full of Step 2 from Biologix
(which can be bought from Scarecrow Organic Cafe)**

Compost

Bokashi Juice

Stir it thoroughly. Water this over your shape at step 8 in a watering can. You can also dip seeds into it.

Other tips

You need to use organic seeds and avoid using any seeds that have been treated. If the seeds have a colour on them like pink or blue then they are not likely to be bee-safe. Unsafe seeds will have a coating that can be chipped with your fingernail. You can also save seeds from flowers that you know are organic.

Using the microbial mixture explained above will give your seeds a strong and good start. Remember the saying - behind every mineral is a microbe. Plants need minerals and it is microbiology that helps to turn minerals that are in the soil into a form that plants can use. Introducing microbes to your seeds right at the beginning means that as soon as it sends out its first shoot, a microbe is there waiting to help it grow.

Do not use any products at anytime that are toxic to bees as flowers grown with poisons will kill bees, butterflies and other small creatures. Read the fine print on the labels of products to make sure they are not harmful. Neonicotinoids are especially harmful.

After scattering your seeds onto the ground, make sure they are covered by at least 2 cm of light sandy soil. Seeds need to be covered but they also need to be able to feel the light on their heads. This is what tells them which way is up. They need to know this in order to start growing.

