

Meadow Restoration: Where to Begin



Are you interested in establishing a native meadow? Here are some tips and resources to get started.

1. Understanding the process

- **Think about your conservation goals:** View our [VWL Biodiversity Conservation webinar](#) to understand how to recognize what you are starting with and to learn about some of the best management practices that could help transform your property into a biodiverse habitat, no matter the size.
- **Get to know your land:** What amount of light exposure does your site get? What type of soil do you have? What was your property historically used for? These questions are important to ask if you're planning to establish a native meadow. The Piedmont Environmental Council has a [Land Management Guide](#) that details wildlife conservation methods specific to different habitat types. Also, you can visit [this link](#) to learn some basic principles for native meadow restoration.
- **Designing and Installation:** The Xerces Society has an all-encompassing manual for establishing meadows from seed and for understanding what long-term management looks like: [Mid-Atlantic Native Meadows | Xerces Society](#). They also provide a chemical-free guide for organic establishment: [Organic Site Preparation for Wildflower Establishment | Xerces Society](#)



2. Who can help?

- Resource professionals local to Virginia such as Private Lands Biologists are a great resource for information on conservation management and cost-share programs. They will visit your property and provide management plans that best suit management goals. Visit this website to find contact info for the Private Lands biologist in your area: [Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Contact Map \(virginia.gov\)](#)
- The Clifton Institute, based out of Warrenton, has a Land Management Outreach Associate available to visit local properties and give advice about managing land for the benefit of native plants and animals, with an emphasis on wildflower meadows and grassland restoration. For more information, visit [Resources for Landowners – The Clifton Institute](#).



3. How can I support wildlife in my meadows and beyond?

- [This pollinator webinar](#) provides a description of pollination biology, guidelines for creating pollinator habitat, and an overview of our most at-risk native bees.
- VWL has a list of [Field Management Guidelines](#) to promote habitat for grassland birds. Using just one of the practices mentioned in this document will have a positive impact on these threatened bird populations.
- Create year-round bird and pollinator habitat with these [Wildlife in Winter Tips](#)



Smithsonian
Conservation Biology Institute

www.vaworkinglandscapes.org



[VirginiaWorkingLandscapes](#)



[VirginiaWorkingLandscapes](#)

4. Choosing the right native plant species

- Virginia Working Landscapes has some helpful resources on our website. We compiled this [Suggested Species for Meadow Planting list](#) with some of our local conservation partners, suggesting native species specific to your physiographic region and soil type and providing resources for building your own seed mix. Also on our website is the [Native Plant Highlights](#), which gives detailed descriptions of native plants found in Northern Virginia and surrounding areas.
- Plant NOVA Natives has a [native plant guide](#) detailing growing conditions and suitable habitat for each species, as well as a [bloom time calendar](#). Also on their website is a native plants master list for professionals (including growth preferences etc.): <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/plant-lists-for-professionals>



Photos of a native meadow restoration over a four year time period at Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, VA. This demonstration plot was planted with a native seed mix .