

## Areas and strips sown with flower mixtures

<b>Goal</b>	Provision of flowers, nectar and pollen for wild bees, bumblebees and other insects
<b>Short description of the measure</b>	<p>Cultivation of annual, biennial or perennial flower mixtures in a square-shaped area or in strips</p> <p>From the conservancy point of view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flowering mixtures must be autochthon, i.e. that species are indigenous to a given region or ecosystem</li> <li>flowering mixtures should include a variety of different species</li> <li>flowering mixtures are rather perennial</li> </ul> <p>Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No use of pesticides or fertilizer</li> <li>Annual mixtures are not mown at all</li> <li>Biannual mixtures are mown not more than once</li> <li>Perennial mixtures: mowing rather late after flowering if necessary</li> <li>If some of the weeds gets dominant punctual manual mowing or leaning of this weeds will be important.</li> <li>It is important that flower strips get only mown or mulched partly instead of all in once, e.g. 10–50 % could be left aside for insects</li> <li>Cutting height should be as high as possible, at least 7–10 cm from the ground</li> <li>Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent further compaction</li> <li>Mulch should be removed</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>  (When to start a measure and anticipated time for implementation)	<p>For the Mediterranean region, the time of sowing is dependent on favourable weather conditions for germination, which is in general in autumn. In temperate regions, sowing periods depend on the seed mixtures:</p> <p>Perennial flower mixtures should be sown in April/May or September. Duration is recommended on about 5 years. Biennial mixtures should be sown beginning from April or later in July until September. Annual cultivations should be sown in April or May.</p> <p>Mowing should take place as late as possible in the year in order to allow also late-flowering plants to ripen fruits (late September).</p>
<b>How auditors can assess if the measure has been implemented in a good quality?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flowering strips: minimum width of 3 m</li> <li>Flowering aspects can be found even in the second or third year of implementation</li> <li>Structural diversity of the strips and plots (not a sole grass community)</li> <li>High diversity of flowering species (Can be checked on the receipt of the seeding material)</li> <li>Natural, autochthon seeding mixtures was used (this can also be checked on the receipt of the seeding material)</li> <li>Mown in September after flowering</li> </ul>



Pic. 1 & 2: Flowering mixture include a variety of different species



Pic. 3: Room for improvement: Flowering mixture including only a few species






Pic. 4: Room for improvement: flower strip dominated by grasses

**Additional information the auditor need for verification (if any)**

In Germany, autochthon seeding material should refer to VWV-Regiosaaten® or RegioZert®. Auditors can check the certificate of the seeding material.

Important to know: Optical and ecological occurrence of flowering areas can be quite different. A certain amount of grass is tolerable.

<b>Effects on biodiversity</b>  (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 <p>Provision of <b>flowers, nectar, and pollen</b> for <b>wild bees</b>, bumblebees and other insects</p> <p>Support of useful macro- and microorganisms</p> <p>Provision of hibernation habitat for insects in parts which retained over winter</p> <p>Retreat and foraging habitat for insects during agricultural work</p>
	 <p>Breeding and foraging habitat for <b>field birds</b> such as partridge, corn bunting, quail</p> <p>Provision of foraging habitat for birds in parts which retained over winter</p> <p>Retreat and foraging habitat for field birds during agricultural work</p>
	 <p>Retreat and foraging habitat for <b>hare</b> during agricultural work</p>
<b>Indicator/key data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Size in ha</li> <li>▪ Minimum width of 3 m</li> </ul>
<b>Reference</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de">www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen">www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen</a></li> <li>▪ Promotion of biodiversity in fruit plantations – NABU; REWE and Lake Constance Foundation, 2015</li> <li>▪ Netzwerk Blühende Landschaft – Mellifera e.V.; <a href="http://www.bluehende-landschaft.de">www.bluehende-landschaft.de</a></li> </ul>

## Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for auditors of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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