

## Areas and strips sown with wild flowers

### Goal

Provision of flowers, nectar and pollen for wild bees, bumblebees and other insects

### Short description of the measure

Cultivation of annual, biennial or perennial flower mixtures in a square-shaped area or in strips

From the conservancy point of view:

- flowering mixtures must be autochthon, i.e. that species are indigenous to a given region or ecosystem
- flowering mixtures should include a variety of different species
- flowering mixtures are rather perennial

Management:

- No use of pesticides or fertilizer
- Annual mixtures are not mown at all
- Biannual mixtures are mown not more than once
- Perennial mixtures: mowing rather late after flowering if necessary
- If some of the weeds gets dominant punctual manual mowing or leaning of this weeds will be important.
- 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
- Cutting height should be as high as possible, at least 7–10 cm from the ground
- Avoid cutting when the soil is moist, to prevent further compaction
- Mulch should be removed



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**

<p><b>Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures</b></p>	<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</li> <li>▪ Natural, autochthon seeding mixtures should be used</li> <li>▪ Mown in September after flowering</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effects on biodiversity</b> (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <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> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  <div> <p>Breeding and foraging habitat <b>for 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> </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div> <p>Retreat and foraging habitat for <b>hare</b> during agricultural work</p> </div> </div>
<p><b>Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased density of pollinators.</li> <li>▪ General increase of beneficial organisms reduces the need of pesticides. Many predators feeding on insects hunt on the field within a radius of 30 m from their retreatment area</li> <li>▪ Reduction of water erosion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Indicator/key data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Size in ha</li> <li>▪ Minimum width of 3 m</li> </ul>

## References

- [www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de](http://www.landwirtschaft-artenvielfalt.de)
- [www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen](http://www.franz-projekt.de/massnahmen)
- Promotion of biodiversity in fruit plantations – NABU; REWE and Lake Constance Foundation, 2015
- Netzwerk Blühende Landschaft – Mellifera e.V.; [www.bluehende-landschaft.de](http://www.bluehende-landschaft.de)

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

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for product and quality managers of 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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