

## **NOTES FROM A DAY WITH:**

**Design By Nature**

**In their plots at Robert's farm near Urlingford**

**27th July 2011**



**CORN MARIGOLD**  
AKA the kissing daisy. Rich in oils.  
Loved by flies and in particular hover  
flies that munch away on greenflies  
(yeah!!!)



**OX-EYE DAISY**  
Appears in the second year. It is a  
short lived perennial but sets seed  
well. It particularly likes alkaline soils.  
Important wildflower to sow in a  
meadow as it provides the first woody  
roots for the meadow and locks up  
Nitrogen. Birds love it.



**CORN MARIGOLD**  
A nice big field of corn marigold. It is  
an annual but very persistant.



**OX-EYE DAISY**  
As a short lived perennial the typical  
meadow will be mostly Ox-Eye Daisy  
in year 2 but as meadow establishes,  
by year 5+, it will occur just about 1 per  
square metre. If it disappears re-harrow  
the meadow to open up the ground and  
allow the ox eye to reappear



**CORNCOCKLE**  
An annual.



**WILD CARROT**  
Takes contaminants from the soil.  
Good for light esker type soils



**CORNCOCKLE**  
Getting ready to flower



**WILD PARSNIP**  
Beware of skin sensitivities if you are  
susceptible



WILD PARSNIP



RED CAMPION

Normally a hedgerow plant but adds good colour to a meadow. Grows naturally in soils around Sligo.



OX-EYE DAISY



WILD CARROT RED CAMPION & POPPIES.



POPPY

Annual but will not reappear in the meadow unless there are areas re cleared for it each year. Will not compete with other plants. To keep poppy reappearing rotovate it in again before November frosts.



WIDE VIEW OF FLOWER BEDS  
Traditional Irish meadows were Corn-flowers, poppies, May weed, Forget me nots



POPPY

Beautiful bed of poppies containing 3 different forms, one of which was thought to be extinct



VERBASCUM OR MULLIEN

Grows on Esker type landscapes and seeds like mad.



HEDGE PARSLEY  
A beautiful airy plant



SELF HEAL WITH WHITE CLOVER  
White clover difficult to deal with in a meadow can become a problem in second year on fertile soils. Native white clover lower growing and will not compete with meadow but clover used in pasture land is bigger and spreads prolifically. Cut the clover to 4-5 inches in July prior to its seeding. Or spot treat with spray. Not a huge problem mixed here with self heal as the clover seeds first.



HEDGE PARSLEY



SELF HEAL



VERBASCUM  
Striking colour size and shape



ST. JOHN'S WORT



RED CAMPION



ST. JOHN'S WORT



CORN CHAMOMILE



WILD PARSNIP



STEM OF CORN CHAMOMILE



WILD CARROT  
A biennial also grows on light esker type soils.



CHICKWEED, YUM



BIRDS FOOT TREFOIL  
This plant, as well as Fumitory and Chamomile, will hold a meadow together and keep it upright, (unlike a meadow with lots of grasses that can lodge in heavy rains and wind)



WILD PARSNIP FLOWERING.  
The one someone's holding onto, the other one is wild carrot. Wild parsnip is a biennial plant; grows on eskers. You've already seen this without the flower.  
Look out for possible sensitivities



HYPERICUM / ST. JOHN'S WORT



FIELD SCABIOUS

These photos do not do this lovely plant justice. A beautiful soft purple that the flash on the camera killed. Does well naturally on dry alkaline soil. Very valuable wildflower crop. Butterflies are very fond of it too.



YARROW



FIELD SCABIOUS



YARROW



FIELD SCABIOUS



YARROW



YARROW



KNAPWEED.

A valuable herb. Also can be grown to provide bird seed. Butterflies are very fond of it



KNAPWEED FLOWER



FIELD CORNFLOWER



KNAPWEED FLOWER



FIELD CORNFLOWER



KNAPWEED BED



FIELD CORNFLOWER



FIELD CORNFLOWER  
Annual flower. Worth lots of money in cosmetic industry and in dried flowers but beautiful here too.



FIELD CORNFLOWER



FIELD CORNFLOWER



LADY'S BEDSTRAW



FIELD CORNFLOWER



FLOWERY MEADOW

Lawn at the front, low growing meadow next, high growing meadow with annuals next. Then an area of no cut or Spring Cut only right at the back.



LADY'S BEDSTRAW  
Was harvested to put into mattresses years ago thanks to its sweet smell. Hence the name.....



FLOWERY MEADOW



FIELD CORNFLOWER



FLOWERY MEADOW





FLOWERY MEADOW



COW SLIP SEEDS



FLOWER MEADOW



ESTABLISHED MEADOW  
Note the ox-eye daisy concentration as mentioned earlier



WOUND WORT



MEADOW



WOUND WORT



SOW THISTLE  
An awful weed. Speaking of pigs: they can be useful to grub up the ground and get it clean. Pigs in for the summer; rotovate and clear off over winter, pigs back in the next year.... Voila! Boars dig down more than sows.



### SOW THISTLE

Take a good look and remember this one. You don't want to see it again. Other horrors: fat hen (has blackflies and mites the dirty thing), Red shank (black spots on leaves, clusters of pink tiny ball flowers), bind weed, Couch grass, creeping buttercup....Can spot treat or weed wipe with spray, use black plastic, keep them mowed, pull by hand especially before seeding. Or just keep growing taller plants!



### DWARF MUSK MALLOW



### RAGGED ROBIN SEEDS

Flower gives lovely colour in a meadow. But don't take my word for it; the flowers are on the next page.



### DWARF MUSK MALLOW



### RAGGED ROBIN SEEDS



### DWARF MUSK MALLOW



### SELF HEAL



### POPPIES AND WHITE CAMPION

White campion likes light soils. A lovely clear white colour.



ARTEMESIA.  
Shakespeare's Wormwood.  
Absinthe anyone...?



WHITE CAMPION



FIELD CRANESBILL  
Isn't it beautiful. A nearly luminous  
blue.



RAGGED ROBIN FLOWER  
Likes damp soil



FIELD CRANESBILL



RAGGED ROBIN FLOWER AND  
WHITE CAMPION



SELF HEAL, OX-EYE DAISY.....ETC



RAGGED ROBIN FLOWER



WHITE CAMPION



WHITE CAMPION AND OX-EYE DAISY



DWARF MUSK MALLOW AND SELF HEAL



WHITE CAMPION  
Yes I know.... but I like it.



VISIT TO DESIGN BY NATURE MEADOW OF WILD FLOWERS.

27th July 2011.

General Advice on Wild Flower Meadows:

Prepare the bed, prepare the bed, prepare the bed.

Get it weed free. Try not to deep plough unless you need to turn over the soil to bury fertile ground.

Then spray (if you are not trying to save the world) in April . Cut off the new foliage and spray again.

Alternatively keep it harrowed all summer, let the perennials emerge and harrow them up and allow them to desiccate on the surface.

Or grow annuals only for 2 years.

Crops such as turnips and potatoes can keep ground clean too. But don't use green mulches unless you take them off site.

Using your method of choice (or a mixture of all them, including pigs); keep the ground clear for at least a summer, 2 summers is better for large projects, you can always cover the ground with green manure, annuals or even grass to allow for weed seeds to develop, then spray them.

And if you really have a vendetta against all weeds, we saw one plot kept weed free for all the very rare, wildflower crops, such as those delicate species that cannot stand weed invasion and will not tolerate any herbicides.

And even still weed were germinating, all be they annuals.

Sandro Recommends clearing the soil weed bank first of roots and seeds.

Then roll the ground, harrow or rake lightly, sow seed by hand and cover back with 1-2mm of lightly raked soil. This is last week in August -1st 2 weeks of September. No later. Alternatively sow in spring but don't expect poppies to break germination; they need frost.

Then generally (but also depending on seed mix):

Cut after seeding first year as low as possible and clear off site.

Cut second year again as low as possible clear off site

Cut the third year in May and then again end July/ beginning August. This is to control grasses that may start to compete with wild flowers.

Object to keep grasses at less than 40%; ideally 15-30% of crop. If land is very fertile you may need a grass and clover parasitising plant such as yellow rattle but increasing the amount of cuts and removing arisings should eventually work as soil fertility decreases and wild flowers get a natural advantage.

Harrowing post cutting is important. You need to harrow the field with 2 passes at right angles once every 2-3 years. The object being to remove thatch. Harrow to keep the ground open and allow the wild flowers to continue seeding without ground level thatch causing moulds that kill seedlings. See Gap Creation" at [http://www.wildflowers.ie/growers\\_manual/p7e\\_gaps\\_creation.htm](http://www.wildflowers.ie/growers_manual/p7e_gaps_creation.htm)

Aim for a even aged meadow with 5-6 species of even height. With 1-1 1/2 ft of clear space to the ground to allow perennials to germinate.

THANK YOU SANDRO AND DBN FOR A LOVELY AND VERY INFORMATIVE DAY.