

GS8

Creation of species-rich grassland

Overview

GS8 Creation of species-rich grassland establishes a priority grassland comprising a range of important plant species. It also benefits priority species including pollinators such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and moths, plus birds and bats.

GS8 Creation of species-rich grassland is eligible for a payment of £428 per hectare for 10 years under the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier agreement.

GS8: Creation of species-rich grassland in detail

A species-rich grassland mix containing a range of legumes, grasses and flowering plants.

How to create a species-rich grassland successfully

- Choose a less fertile site where soil phosphorus is low, and the sward and soil seed bank are not dominated by aggressive plant species or injurious weeds
- Sow an agreed seed mix or add extra plant species to an area of natural regeneration if necessary

Example GS8 Species-rich grassland mix

- Tetraploid Perennial Ryegrass
- Diploid Perennial Ryegrass
- Red Clover
- White Clover
- Birdsfoot Trefoil
- Tall Fescue
- Sheeps Fescue
- Cocksfoot
- Timothy
- Plantain
- Burnet
- Yarrow
- Sheeps Parsley
- Lucerne
- Wild Carrot



Available in 17.5kg per 1/2Ha bags.



Requirements

1. Establish a flower-rich grassland in year 1
2. Maintain it as a permanent grassland by grazing, hay cutting or both
3. Maintain a range of plant heights suitable for insects, birds and other priority species
4. Maintain a continuous cover, particularly over any historic features
5. Minimise manure, fertiliser, pesticide or supplementary feed
6. Control undesirable plants
7. Do not plough, cultivate or re-seed after the grassland has established unless agreed with Natural England
8. Do not harrow, roll or allow scrub or bracken to encroach on historic or archaeological features
9. Take care not to disturb breeding birds or damage nests
10. Keep records of all field operations including associated invoices, grazing activity and input used, plus a standard soil analysis carried out within the last five years. Photographs are also required

Additional notes

The following features may be included in a species-rich grassland:

1. Ditches, dykes, drains, rivers and streams less than 4m wide
2. Temporary water
3. Permanent water less than or equal to 0.1ha*
4. Natural, unsurfaced roads, tracks, paths and bridleways (as long as the other requirements are met)
5. Bracken
6. Scree, rock outcrops and boulders up to 0.1ha
7. Grazed woodland and scrub with grass underneath that livestock can access*
8. Small areas of other habitat types, such as reedbeds*

* at the discretion of Natural England



Find out more:

[DEFRA Countryside Stewardship grants](#)

Disclaimer:

Information correct at the time of going to press.

Farmers and growers should ensure the mixture formulation meets the criteria of their agreement before sowing