

If an area of grass is allowed to grow long, it is possible that a greater diversity of flora would grow and perhaps even a rare flower might appear. This has happened numerous times over the last few years with businesses, local authorities and schools joining in with the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and not mowing grass:

e.g. A rare Green Winged Orchid bloomed in a Portlaoise housing estate after disappearing for 120 years: https://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/Does-the-Covid19-lockdown-have-any-silver-linings.pdf

e.g. rare Bee Orchids bloomed in Cork after mowing stopped: .
<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-31003408.html>

Here are some suggestions to different Meadow Management Methods:

- A meadow can have a 'short cut and lift', that is every 6 weeks. This will keep the grass lower yet allow Clover and Dandelion to bloom. It is often better to start with this method for a couple of years before moving to the Hay Meadow to allow for soil nutrient levels to fall and allow the species richness to develop.
- A Hay Meadow management style calls for one to two cuts and lifts a year, with one Autumn after flowers have seeded and another in early Spring to remove any winter growth. Small to medium sized meadows can be cut with a small tractor, like that used in sports grounds or power scythes and brush cutters. If the latter are used, the hay should be gathered into rows and then piled up to be removed.
- A Spring Bulb Meadow incorporates bulbs thus adding biodiversity value, aesthetic value and a continuous supply of food for wildlife and pollinators.



Power scythe used by Portlaoise Tidy Towns group. <https://www.leinsterexpress.ie/news/portlaoise-480450/portlaoise-residents-saving-wildlife-and-biodiversity.html>

You can enhance the diversity of flora in your meadow by picking wildflower seed elsewhere (Appendix 14) and spreading it here, ideally after the Autumn cut and lift. Spreading Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*) seed or planting plugs will help to outcompete with grass.

It is always advised to cut a nice shape on the long grass area so that it looks defined. Cutting a path through the meadow and keeping it cut short invites the public into the space and defines the shape. Also, the erection of signage is necessary to both educate and also to inform. Suitable signage templates are available to downloaded from <https://pollinators.ie/resources/> under the 'Signage templates' heading.



Mowing a nice shape creates a defined area of meadow thus creating a feature.

See <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/practical-advice-on-managing-wildflower-meadows/> for guidance on managing meadows.

For a more colourful and flower-filled meadow, guidance can be found at <https://pollinators.ie/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/How-to-guide-Wildflower-Meadows-2018-WEB.pdf>