

Winter 2022

The creation of flower-rich habitats is an important action to help promote biodiversity, capture carbon and connect people to nature. Many landowners, farmers and landowning businesses in the South West have been creating these new habitats for these reasons. We are exploring the benefits of wildflowers to the environment, people and economy with a range of landowning businesses. This is our fourth and penultimate newsletter for our Wildflower Collective project, generously funded by the Halpin Trust.

Wildflowers for the environment

Meadow Match

Bodmin airfield, one of our key Meadow Match ‘donor’ sites, had a bumper summer providing seed and green hay for the National Trust, Cornwall Council, the Duchy of Cornwall estates as well as private farmers. From this Wildflower Collective project, we have now supported the creation of 14 ha of new grassland habitat by matchmaking donor and receptor sites. Combining the work on this project with our previous work on [SWEEP](#), we have now started to restore 58 ha of wildflower meadow in Cornwall and Devon. One of our key partners this year is Rosuick farm who have added another 9 ha of potential donor sites that they manage in hand and a further 67 where they have permission to harvest to our Meadow Match database. We have also teamed up with Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to help find even more Meadow Match sites in 2023 and develop regional meadow ‘hubs’ to help people share knowledge, skills and equipment.

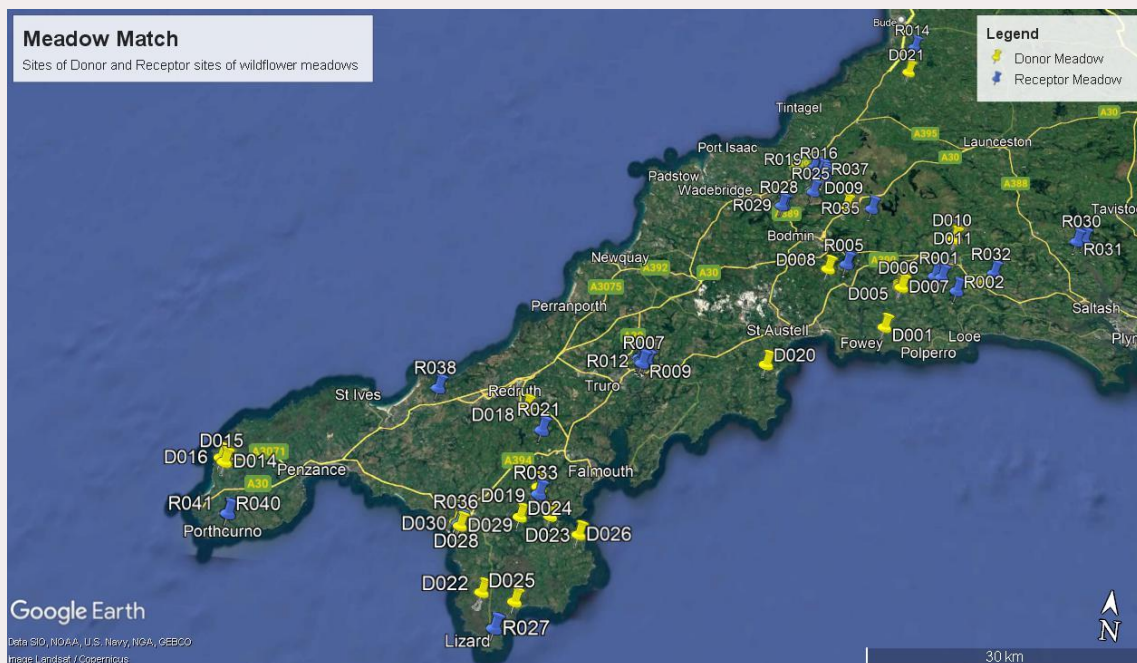


Figure 1. Map of the Meadow Match donor and receptor sites in Cornwall and Devon.

“It’s been fantastic to become part of the Meadow Match network of meadows and to connect with some great donor sites within proximity to Cotehele. This network has and will enable us to create more wonderful wildflower meadows on our wider estate, which ultimately means we’ll continue to deliver our organisational goal of Restoring a Healthy Beautiful Natural Environment.” George Holmes, Lead Ranger, Cotehele, National Trust.

Wildflowers for people

Update - The Lost Gardens of Heligan wildflower meadow visitor survey

Over the last two summers, we have been running an anonymous online engagement survey on the experience of visitors to the 4.65ha wildflower meadow display at the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Here we provide an update to the results that we shared in our Autumn 2021 newsletter by including our 2022 survey results. Overall, there was little change in our results (Figure 2) once we included the 2022 survey answers. There was a small increase in the percentage of visitors having a positive experience (3% more) visiting the meadow. The majority of participants didn’t visit the Lost Gardens of Heligan to specifically see the meadow (71%), however, 29% said that the meadow was ‘partially’ the reason they visited with one respondent visiting specifically to see the meadow! A lower percentage of visitors (3% less) would visit again and a higher percentage (2% more) would recommend visiting the meadow to someone else.

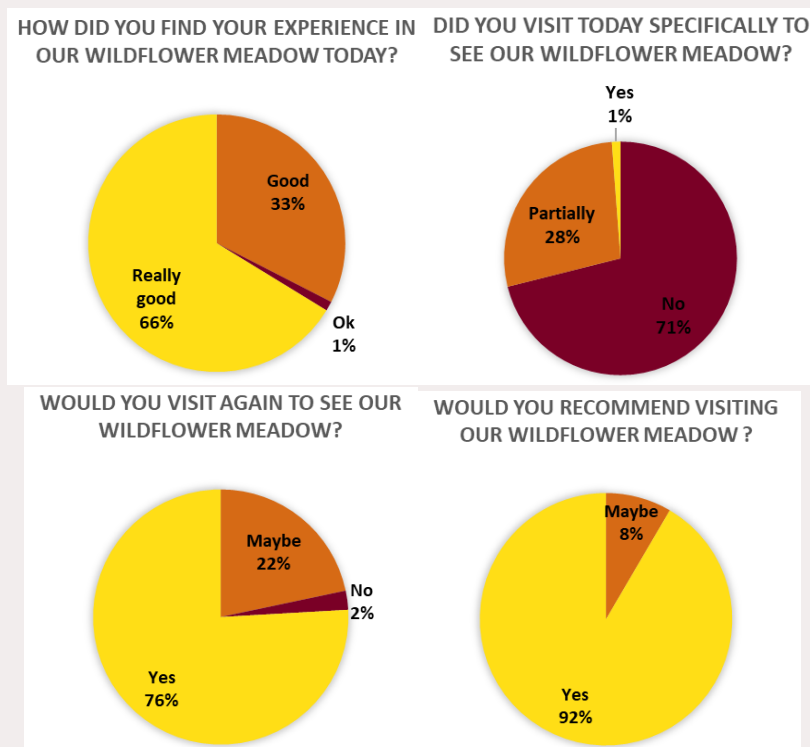


Figure 2. Results of our wildflower meadow visitor survey at the Lost Gardens of Heligan.



Figure 2. Word cloud summarising the responses of visitors to the wildflower meadow display at the Lost Gardens of Heligan to the question - Tell us about your experience in our wildflower meadow today – including any benefits you felt you gained from it?

Some anonymous quotes below from survey participants-

“We weren’t aware of the meadow before visiting the gardens and enjoyed strolling around the paths to be immersed amongst the flowers. The smell of chamomile was lovely.”

“The sea of yellow, blue and white with the hills in the distance is breath-taking. The sound of the grasshoppers is amazing and watching the bumblebees doing their work while I relax is humbling.”

Wildflowers for business

Seed companies review

With the help of researcher Dr Ellie Bushnell-Crowther, we are investigating the trend in business growth for commercial seed companies over the last decade. We collected freely available financial data from Companies House for 10 seed companies and calculated the ‘working capital’ which we used as a measure of the company's short-term financial health (calculated as current assets minus financial year liabilities). A sneak peek at our results shows that all but one company saw an increase on average over the last decade, the average across the 10 companies was an increase of 100% (e.g. 10% per year) and even the one company that had an overall decrease in working capital over the last decade saw a huge increase in working capital for 2020 and 2021 compared to the previous years with nearly 150% increase on average over the 2 years. These results indicate a healthy and growing sector and highlight that the impact of the pandemic may have potentially driven further growth in the industry as customers looked to provide wildlife friendly habitats at home and restore nature across public and private greenspace and farmland. We’ll make the full report available soon.

Harvest and Case Studies of Wildflowers as a crop

This spring we 'seed-funded' Trevisker Community Meadow CIC to create their own commercial annual wildflower crop. Despite a hot and dry summer, they had a successful harvest and we are delighted to report that they are supporting Age UK's #GoForGold campaign celebrating their 50 years as a charity. The team at Trevisker have donated 2500 packets of golden Corn marigold seed grown on their site near Padstow at Trevisker Garden Centre, Cornwall. They are encouraging people to pick up a packet of Corn marigold seed, sow it and share their photos using #seedcornwall. To get your seeds and take part in #GoForGold check out AgeUK Cornwall and Isles of Scilly social media ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)) where they'll have news events where they'll distribute the seed. We are currently creating Case Studies of wildflower seed projects including Trevisker with the help of Placement year student Colton Williams. We'll look forward to sharing these with you early in the new year.

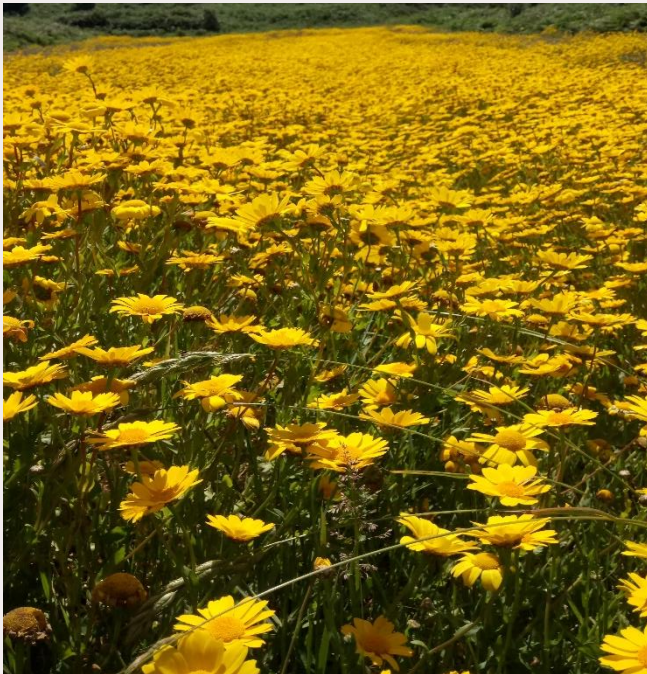


Photo: The team at Trevisker Community Meadow CIC have donated 2500 packets of Corn marigold seed to Age UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Wildflowers into the future

In our last newsletter, we shared an exciting update about our [Wildflower Collective](#) Community Interest Company (CIC) that we have set up to help us carry on with the good work we've been doing on the Wildflower Collective and [SWEEP](#) projects. If you would like to keep up to date with what happens next then please sign up for the newsletter of the website- www.wildflowercollective.org.uk and join us on social media we have an [Instagram](#) @wildflower_collective_cic

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