

Planting A Mini Meadow

by Rebecca C. Crow, Master Gardener Volunteer

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About 15 years ago, I had the idea of installing successive-flowering plants in front of the evergreen foundation plants. I laid out a landscape plan featuring perennials that bloom in the spring (May Night Salvia), summer (Pink Grapefruit Yarrow and Purple Coneflower), and fall (Purple Dome Asters)—all of which are deer-resistant.

After about three years, I added white Stonecrop and Love-in-a-Mist, both of which bloomed in spring. I also included native purple petunias, which bloomed in the summer, and Queen Anne's Lace, which bloomed from spring through summer. To my delight, the Love in a Mist reseeded to additional locations in the bed. Fleabane appeared on its own, along with some white coneflowers. Purple violets also popped up, which the early pollinators loved.

Maintenance is straightforward. We leave the coneflower seed heads up through the winter to provide food and shelter for birds and insects. In March, we mow it all down. Occasionally, I must pull plants out if they start to take over. I devote about 10 minutes a day to pulling weeds from Spring through Summer. The goal is to have it so densely packed with plants that weeds cannot reach bare ground.

My original landscape plan has evolved into something more in line with nature and pollinators' needs: a mini meadow. I recommend starting with a small planting area and then letting nature take its course.

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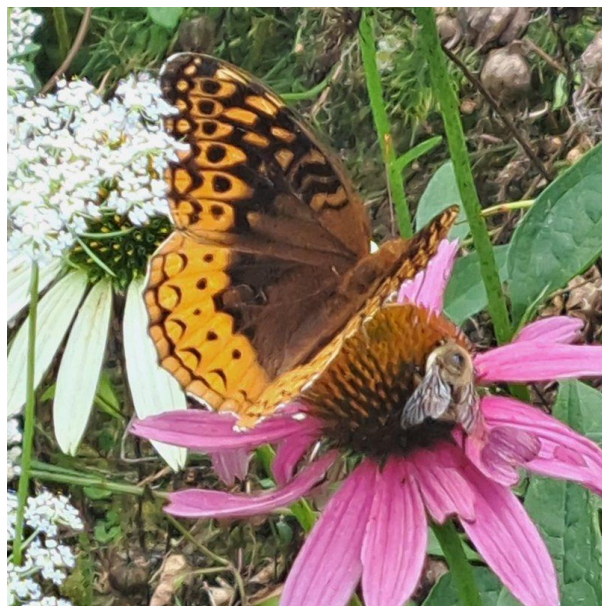


Photo by Rebecca Crow