



OCTOBER TIP SAVINGS: Up to \$300/YR
Avoided Emissions of CO₂: Up to 500 lbs./YR

\$USTAINABILITY \$AVINGS TIP

WILDFLOWERS ANNOUNCE THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING

Plant Wildflower Seeds NOW for Spring Bloom!

When you look at how our native desert plants survive our harsh climate and dry conditions, you learn about all kinds of interesting adaptations. Cactus and other succulent plants (like agaves) store water, gray leaves of sages and brittlebush help reflect the hot sun, and palo verde trees have green bark so that when water is scarce, they can drop their leaves and still photosynthesize or make food.

Wildflowers have a different strategy. They are known as drought evaders, meaning that they only grow when water is available. These colorful plants germinate in the fall and winter when there is adequate seasonal rains starting about October. They stay small and grow slowly through December and January then burst into bloom to announce the arrival of spring.

✂ WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Avoid wildflower or 'meadow' mixes from other parts of the country or world. For example, African Daisies are... well, from Africa. Look for quality, locally grown or collected seed that includes beauties such as Mexican Gold Poppies, Arizona Lupines and Desert Bluebells.



Mexican Gold Poppies and Arizona Lupines planted together provides a great contrast in color.

✂ WHEN & HOW TO PLANT

Spring-blooming wildflowers are best planted anytime between mid-September through mid-November. It is best to mix about a teaspoon of seed with two or more cups of fine soil or organic mulch. This will help to distribute the tiny seeds more evenly. Scatter seed mix and lightly rake into the soil surface or just scratch into granite areas or around boulders.

✂ WATERING & CARE

If we get adequate winter rains, there is no need to water. Otherwise, water the area 2-3 times weekly to germinate, then only once every 3-4 weeks. Since many of the wildflowers are annuals, they will set seeds after they have put on their show. You can collect the seeds yourself to sow next fall or just allow them to fall to the ground. The seeds that don't get eaten by birds or insects will set the stage for the following year if there's adequate rain. Dried plants can be pulled or cut to the ground.

✂ OTHER FALL PLANTING

1. **LANDSCAPE PLANTS:** Call for a FREE copy of our "Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert" booklet at (480) 644-3306 or find online at www.amwua.org/plants.
2. **VEGETABLE GARDEN PLANTING GUIDE:** Find one at the UofA Extension website or by calling (602) 827-8200, <http://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1435.pdf>.
3. **WINTER RYE:** If you're thinking of overseeding your Bermuda grass, check out our website at www.mesaaz.gov/conservation to see the "Top Ten Reasons Not to Overseed with Winter Rye."

\$START \$AVING

You can start saving by planting water-wise, seasonal plants and doing your part for *building a sustainable community*. Visit our website for more sustainability savings tips at www.mesaaz.gov/sustainability. Call or email us for a **free packet of Sonoran Desert wildflower seeds** at (480) 644-3306 or conservation.info@mesaaz.gov.



mesaaz.gov/sustainability

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