

SITE PREPARATION

Proper site preparation is critical to the success of a wildflower seeding project. Since the majority of the wildflowers and prairie grasses are slow to establish perennials it is beneficial to eliminate as much of the competition as possible prior to seeding. We assume here that the current vegetation is comprised of lawn or old field non-native species. There are organic and inorganic site preparation options including:

1. Solarization is using tarp, black plastic or clear plastic with the sun's heat to kill off vegetation. This is a great choice for smaller areas. We would recommend securing the cover in spring, uncover and seed in the fall for best results. Do not disturb the soil prior to seeding.

Here is an [interesting interview](#) which sheds more light on this technique.

2. Tilling uses a walk behind rototiller or tiller implement on a tractor and involves physically removing vegetation including root material from the soil. This process should begin in spring and continue throughout the growing season until the seeding in the fall. You should plan on tilling at least 4 times during this time and include raking out root material.

3. Herbicide may be used to eliminate current vegetation. In most cases this is done using a Glyphosate product that does not include persistent additives. 1-3 applications would typically be necessary depending upon the current vegetation. Reading the herbicide label thoroughly and cautious application is a must. Do not disturb the soil prior to seeding.

The dead stubble remaining after solarization or herbicide application need not be removed. The remaining stubble works as a mulch, holding wildflower seed in place. However excess thatch should be raked to assure good seed to soil contact.