

Wildflower experiment using biodegradable matting

In March 2022 within the meadow area of Worth Park we experimented with biodegradable matting which is composed of Jute, cotton, brown wool with a hessian scrim. The matting itself slowly breaks down over a period of 5-8 months with no adverse effect on the local environment.

The idea behind this is to do away with the preparation of an area via herbicides and or a rotavator.

Both of which would cause a negative effect on soil in question.

Herbicides that would affect the soil organisms and the rotavator on soil structure as well as releasing carbon. (Soil can capture up to 3 times more carbon than a tree).

In addition to above the other main reason behind this project was to create an essential habitat for pollinators that have declined dramatically over the last few decades or so. (1 in 6 bee species are regionally extinct and 40% are vulnerable to extinction globally)



In mid-March 2022 we started the project.

First, we laid out the matting over a specific area and then we put about 3-4 inches of rubbish soil on top.

We did this project in conjunction with Kew Gardens as part of our apprentice exchange program.

we prepared 3 areas with the same seed mix of annuals, biannual and perennials.



26th May things start to take hold and we could identify various species of emerging wildflowers with the help of Ewan from Kew gardens. (Apprentice exchange)

Keep in mind that each strip was prepared differently:

Number 1 with upside down turf.

Number 2 gritty soil but based on RHS border preparation of raking, firming the soil and raking again and again.

Number 3 the same soil but absolutely no preparation, just dump the soil and that's it.

14th June



Bed 1 (upside down turf)



Bed 2 RHS Standard



Bed 3 No Preparation

You can see clearly that that each bed is growing at a different rate according to soil type and preparation but all are the same wildflower mix.

Late June to early July



Hard labour and patience lead to fruition of colour and also provided a perfect home and food for pollinators.

Member of the public enjoying the Picasso of colour.

June 2022 Inspiration

In fact, the wildflower area was so successful that a local artist who is her 90s Beryl Hovell did a painting.

The painting is now hanging proudly within the community rooms of Ridley's Court.



Mid-July the drought begins to bite



Bed 1



Bed 2



Bed 3

But it is still providing an important source of nectar for pollinators

Early August 2022



The drought has taken its toll on our wildflowers.

So, we decided to harvest early by cutting it down to about 3-4 inches.

Putting it into manageable piles ready to be shredded.

The idea is to shred 100% of what we had cut down which also included the seed heads.



This would give a good mix of organic matter as well as great variety seeds that were scattered directly back onto the borders from which they came from.



Recycle, Reuse, Reseed, Rejuvenate

In only 2 weeks after shredding and a little rain you can see from the photo the emergence of new seeds.

Overall, the project has been a success by increasing plant diversity, providing home and food for wildlife, Carbon sequestration and connecting people to nature (ecotherapy) within this area of the park.

