

COMPARING FLOWERING BEE LAWNS WITH OTHER TYPES OF VEGETATION

Flowering bee lawns combine features of traditional turfgrass lawns and other types of vegetation supporting bees and preserving the open sightlines and many recreational uses associated with lawns.



| | Traditional turf | Bee Lawn | Urban meadow | Native prairie | Pollinator garden |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| Description | Area dominated by & managed for turfgrasses. Turf that has not been treated with herbicides may have unintentional forbs. ¹ | A mix of low-input turfgrasses & low-growing forbs selected to provide bee forage. Mowed regularly to maintain recreational uses similar to lawns. ⁴ | "Naturalistic, unmown grassland with or without flowering forbs." ⁵ | Area dominated by grasses & grass-like species, often with a diverse assemblage of forbs & other plant species. ⁹ | Garden bed planted with species selected to provide high-quality pollinator forage. |
| Key criteria for selecting species | Appearance (e.g. color, texture); Maintenance requirements | Provision of pollinator forage (& other ecological benefits); Ability to grow in lawn conditions | Biodiversity (& other ecological benefits); Appearance/color diversity | Native species (& other ecological benefits) | Provision of pollinator forage (& other ecological benefits) |
| Vegetation height | Short (2-4.5 inches) ³ | Short (2-4.5 inches) ³ | Short (2 inches) to Tall (40 inches) ⁵ | Short (6 inches) to Tall (120 inches) ^{9,11} | Varies |
| Suitability for foot traffic | Excellent | Good | Poor to None | None | None |
| Mowing frequency | 1-6/month ^{2,3} | 1-3/month ⁴ | 1/month to 1/season ⁵ | 0-2/season ¹⁰ | N/A |
| Other maintenance considerations | Staff are usually already familiar with & skilled at maintaining. | Can mow less frequently than traditional turf. No new equipment is necessary. Herbicide use should be avoided. | Mowing is substantially reduced. Removal of plant residues may require additional equipment/effort. | May be maintained by prescribed burns. Requires specialized training and equipment. | Requires intensive management, such as hand weeding & mulching. |

Illustration by Joseph Nowak III. References: ¹Ignatieva, Eriksson, Eriksson, Berg, & Hedblom, 2017; ²Yue et al., 2017; ³Cornell University, 2018; ⁴Lane, 2016; ⁵Southon et al., 2017 (p.106); ⁶Hoyle et al., 2018; ⁷Smith & Fellowes, 2015; ⁸Smith & Fellowes, 2014; ⁹Blair, Nippert, & Briggs, 2014; ¹⁰Minnesota Dept of Natural Resources, 2004; ¹¹Oregon State University, 2018.