



Seeding dates for Florida ecotypes of native wildflowers and grasses

Sowing seed at the appropriate time of year is one of the factors critical to successfully establishing a native wildflower/grass planting. Seed must be sown when germination, emergence and subsequent growth will occur quickly enough for wildflowers to fend off competing weed seedlings and for seedlings to tolerate adverse weather conditions.

The recommended sowing dates for north, central and south Florida shown on pages 2 and 3 are based on the estimated occurrences of the ideal combinations of soil temperatures and rain that are most likely to promote relatively quick germination, emergence, and seedling growth. This estimate also takes into consideration the ideal time during which wildflower seedlings have the best chance to out-compete weed seedlings and/or nonnative turf grasses.

However, when deciding on a sowing date, consider that Florida's climate is a continuum from north to south Florida, which may mean the sowing date in your area may need to be adjusted accordingly. Finally, generalizing seeding dates for Florida ecotypes of native wildflowers and grasses is challenging because weather can vary substantially from climatological norms during late fall and winter.

Notes about factors affecting germination and emergence:

Soil temperature – Germination rates tend to progressively decrease as soil temperatures drop below the mid-60s or rise above the mid-90s. In the top 1/2 inch or so of soils, where seed germinate, soil temperature is closely tied to air temperature. In addition, dark-colored soil tends to be warmer than light-colored soils. Moist soils will be cooler than dry soils during the day and warmer than dry soils at night. **NOTE:** Seeds of some species—for example, blazing stars (*Liatris* spp.)— require cool, moist conditions to germinate.

Rain – If supplying supplemental irrigation because of dry weather, provide at least 1/4 inch of water (3/8 to 1/2 inch in sandy soils) daily for two weeks. Use small droplets that will not drive seeds into soil. If seeds are too deeply embedded, (1/2 inch or more), they might germinate but never emerge.

During the late fall/early winter, the sowing season can be extended if rain is adequate and warm weather is predicted. For example, from late fall 2010 through early 2011, above-normal temperatures are predicted for north Florida, with normal temperatures elsewhere. However, below-normal rainfall is predicted throughout the state, so sowing seed in late fall to early winter might result in poor establishment.

NORTH FLORIDA

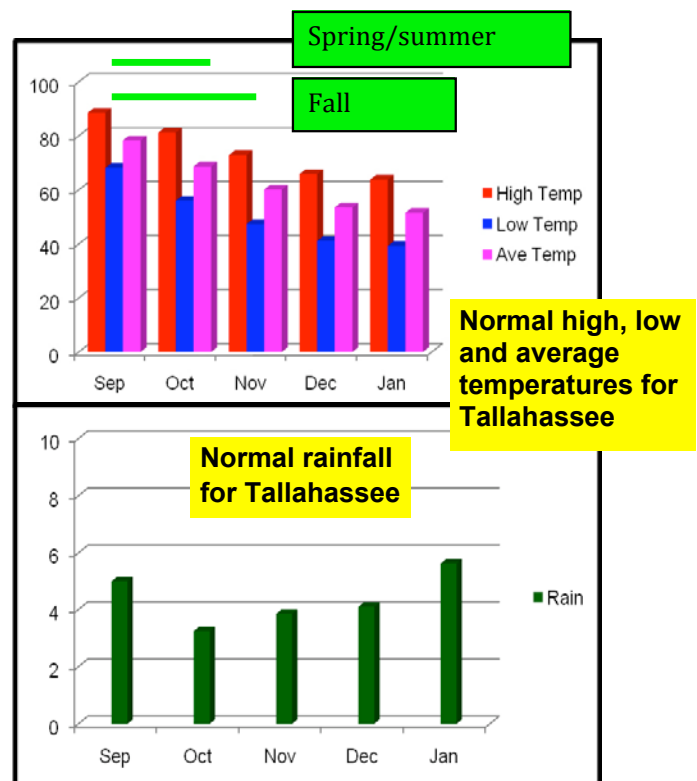
Sow seed of:

Spring/summer flowering species

Mid-September to late-October

Fall flowering species

Mid-September to mid-November



CENTRAL FLORIDA

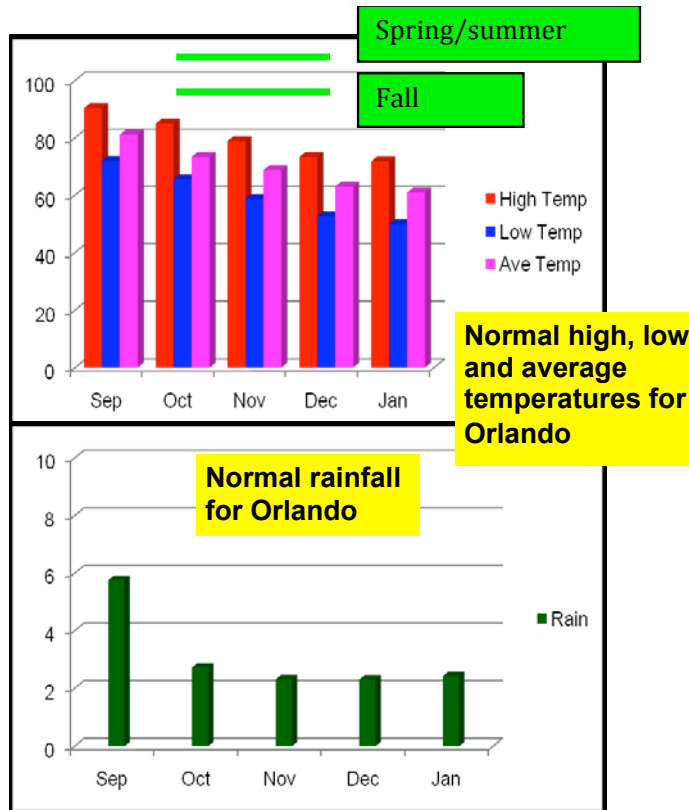
Sow seed of:

Spring/summer flowering species

Mid-October to early January

Fall flowering species

Mid-October to early January



SOUTH FLORIDA

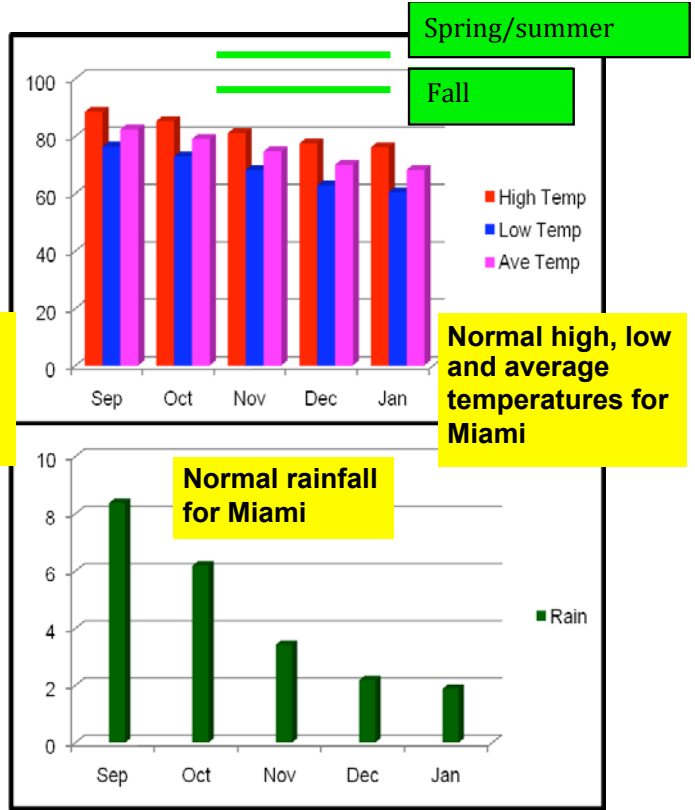
Sow seed of:

Spring/summer flowering species

November to mid-January

Fall flowering species

November to mid-January



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