

WHAT IS WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY SEED MIX?

A wildlife-friendly seed mix is a seed mix that is specifically planned to provide forage and cover for wildlife. Providing resources for wildlife in managed forests is an important goal for many landowners. One way to accomplish this is to provide cover and forage opportunities by sowing seeds after a disturbance event on the landscape, such as a wildfire or logging. Wildlife-friendly seed mixes are available that can target restoration objectives to benefit a wide variety of species, including pollinators, upland game birds, deer and elk. Mixes should be comprised of native species, but can also include some nonnative annuals that are not invasive.

WHERE AND WHEN SHOULD A SEED MIX BE APPLIED?

There are many situations where a wildlife-friendly seed mix may be appropriate:

- along roadsides to control erosion and protect water quality (replace standard erosion-control mix with a wildlife-friendly mix)
- in clearcuts or wildlife food plots to enhance forage opportunities
- within stands of trees to control erosion and enhance forage opportunities after a wildfire or other disturbance
- at landings or skid roads after a logging operation
- at culvert and bridge replacements
- under powerlines or other open areas to discourage invasive plant growth

In general, pollinator mixes are recommended to be applied at 5 to 7 pounds per acre, but this varies by seed mix and planting site. Other forage mixes are recommended at 14 to 16 pounds per acre. More than one kind of wildlife-friendly forage mix can be applied to a single area. Seeding should typically be done in late fall to allow for natural cold stratification. The seeds undergo a period of dormancy that is interrupted with warmer weather in the spring that causes the seeds to germinate, or grow.

WILDFIRES AND WILDLIFE

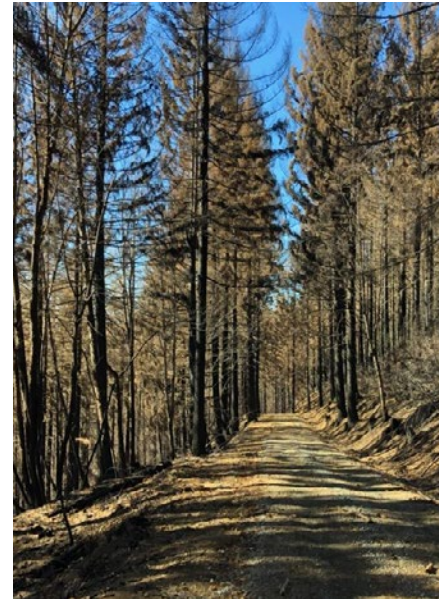
In late summer 2020, Oregon experienced widespread wildfires that burned approximately 1 million acres of forestland.

Applying wildlife-friendly seed mixes to the landscape after a fire may help control erosion and combat the influx of invasive species, and provide much-needed cover and forage for wildlife while forests recover and regrow.

Methods for applying seed mixes after a fire may include aerial application (by helicopter or drone), hydroseeding from roadsides and seeding by hand. Seed mix may be applied to fire lines and fire trail, riparian areas, along roadsides, under powerlines, and anywhere where erosion-control seed mix is currently applied.

Seed mixes, especially for pollinators, can also be spread on burned slash piles after logging operations. The burned wood products enrich the soil with nutrients that promote strong plant growth.

October view of an area burned by the Riverside Fire. A seed mix could be applied here.



Burned forest lands. Seed mix could be applied along this roadside and on adjacent lands.



Fire lines built by a bulldozer are a great place to consider a wildlife-friendly seed mix.



SEED MIX GUIDANCE

Talking with experts from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) or seed growers will help inform your decision about what wildlife-friendly seed mix is right for your property. Recommendations for seed mixes will vary based on the ecoregion, disturbance type, objectives of treatment and a number of other site-specific factors. We recommend contacting your local seed company for advice on what might work best in your area. Using native seed allows landowners to provide benefits to a wide variety of native wildlife. ODFW believes native seed sources should be used whenever possible, though there are instances where it may be appropriate to use seed mixes that include non-native annual seeds to achieve restoration goals. See ODFW's "[Guidance for Rehabilitating Landscapes After Fire](#)" for more detailed information.

WHERE DO YOU GET SEED MIXES?

Finding the right seed mix is important. Seed mixes sourced locally will have a better chance of survival. Some sources to consider for obtaining wildlife-friendly seed mix include:

- Sunmark Seeds (sunmarkseeds.com)
- Pro Time Lawn Seed (PTlawnseed.com)
- Silver Falls Seed Company (silverfallsseed.com)
- Heritage Seedlings (heritageseedlings.com)
- River Refuge Seed Company (riverrefugeseed.com)
- Northwest Meadowscapes (northwestmeadowscapes.com)
- Ioka Farms (iokamarketing.com)

SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

[Oregon Department of Forestry Food Plots:](#)
<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/working/pages/fpa.aspx>

[Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife guidelines for rehabilitation after a fire:](#)
<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/docs/ODFW%20Guide%20Rehab%20Landscapes%20After%20Fires.pdf>

[Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:](#)
<https://www.rmef.org/>

[Oregon Hunters Association:](#)
<https://oregonhunters.org/>

[After the Fire Publication: KnowYourForest.org](#)

[Pollinator Fact Sheet: KnowYourForest.org](#)



Under powerlines is another great place to plant a wildlife-friendly seed mix. This landowner used a mix similar to the one recommended by ODFW to convert seven acres of Scotch broom to a wildlife-friendly field of grasses, forbs and shrubs.



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The Oregon Forest Resources Institute supports the forest sector and the stewardship of natural resources by advancing Oregonians' understanding of the social, environmental and economic benefits of our forests.

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