

National Wildflower Week



Celebrate and promote the other May holiday.

By Carrie Burns

Mother's Day doesn't have to be the only big money-making holiday for you in May. National Wildflower Week is May 4-10, and it's a great time to promote some of the products and green goods that have been sitting in the same place for years. Since your customers are shopping for Mother's Day, it won't hurt to give them something else to celebrate.

National Wildflower Week was founded by Charles Spencer in 1987 and first launched in 1988. Spencer wanted to honor Edward Piela, a naturalist and botanist, for his work teaching and promoting wildflowers.

National Wildflower Week, which is sponsored by Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (previously The National Wildflower Research Center), is aimed at educating people about the environmental necessity, economic value and natural beauty of native plants.

"Wildflowers draw us closer to our surroundings," says Spencer. "I've been gardening wildflowers for many years now — maybe 20 years. I have a one-quarter-acre plot of land, and I have about 240 species of native plants in the yard now."

Wildflowers are becoming more and more popular, and there are many to choose from. According to the National Park Service, more than 15,000 different species of native plants are recognized from the United States and Canada. Because wildflower gardens require such little maintenance when compared to traditional gardens, consumers are "buying" the idea as a way to save both time and water.

Help your customers find out which wildflowers will be best for their desired area of planting. Though they require less maintenance, wildflowers still need a small amount of care, such as proper soil, light and moisture. And since they also attract a variety of butterflies and birds, you can display many different items from fertilizers to birdhouses to watering nozzles in your National Wildflower Week promotion — anything to help your customers with their wildflower gardens.

And, don't forget the wildflowers. Many varieties of flowers you may not have thought of — phlox, rudbeckia, echinacea, dicentra, heuchera, tiarella — are considered wildflowers. "For many years, one of the things I had done is contacted a number of nurseries and

Top photo courtesy of Flecke Saaten Handel, Wunstorf, Germany; Bottom photo courtesy of Beauty Beyond Belief, Fort Collins, Colo.



Echinacea

'Primadonna Deep Rose' from Benary thrives in hot, sunny locations even under drought conditions. It also blooms from mid-summer until the first frost. The large, 5- to 6-inch flowers are lavender-rose and daisy-like, forming in large, dense clumps. The natural flowering time is from July-September. Ernst Benary of America. (815) 895-6705. **Write in 1528**



Heucherella

'Viking Ship' has silvery leaves and starlike spires of coral pink flowers. It spreads to 12 inches, the foliage grows to 6 inches and the flower to 18 inches. Hardy in Zones 4-11. EuroAmerican. (888) 323-0730. **Write in 1529** ▶

asked them to put together two gardens — one for shade and one for sun — of 10 plants each, and these would be plants not seeds. And they would be easy to grow. We promoted these gardens and people would order them," says Spencer. You can do this with your garden center. Group some of the wildflowers with similar care instructions, throw in a few tools and sell the idea.

You won't need anything new. Just create signage that advertises National Wildflower Week. Or, team up with your local public gardens, state parks or nature organization, who are most likely promoting the holiday, and work together to create programs for your customers. "Garden visits are a great thing you can do," says Spencer. "Or sponsoring a walk or wildflower programs — workshops and courses." Read up on wildflowers, run a few sales and you might find a new favorite May holiday. 🌸

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Flower Seeds

The American Heritage "Spirit of 1776" is a seed, fertilizer and mulch combination, colored a patriotic red and blue, that will allow consumers to preserve the nation's heritage by growing flowers that grew back in 1776.

American Heritage incorporates recycled white office paper into the product as a mulching agent, called EncapMulch. Perennials are included in the mix, which comes in three sizes: 1.1, 2.3 and 6 pounds, covering 25, 50 and 100 sq.ft.

ENCAP, LLC. (920) 406-5050.
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