

# Biodiversity-promoting measures: landscape structures



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## Field margins

### Description of the measure

A 3-10 m wide, perennial, extensively used, herbaceous strip on dry to moist sites.

Ideal along embankments, ditches and plot borders, on slopes as erosion protection and on shallow, stony, sandy and dry sites in sunny locations. Damp to wet (but not shady!) sites are also suitable.

If possible, plough in autumn or at least one month before sowing. After winter, harrow to a depth of approx. 10 cm and then, before sowing, increasingly harrow the surface 2-3 times at two-week intervals and prepare a fine-crumb seedbed.

Sow in mid-April to the end of May immediately after the last soil cultivation as a surface wide seed with a seeder or by hand and roll on directly. Do not drill in and do not sow a cover crop.

Make 1-2 clean-up cuts 8-10 cm above the ground as soon as the herbaceous cover begins to close in places. Gently windrow the cuttings (e.g. with a motor mower with a grass cutting device) and remove the material from the area.

Alternately mow half of the margins once a year from mid-August. Ideally, cuttings should be removed or piled up in large heaps in the fringe, or left lying around. In the vicinity of water bodies, cut at least 10 cm high to protect amphibians and reptiles.

### Effects on biodiversity

Rich, year-round supply of pollen, nectar and seeds as well as reproduction, stepping stone and connectivity habitat for insects and birds.

Important retreat and hibernation sites for many insects and small animals (e.g. brown hare), which are protected from frost in the soil of the fringes.

Provides breeding sites for ground-nesting birds such as skylark and stonechat.

### Other positive effects

Promotes beneficial insects and thus contributes to natural pest regulation.

Encourages pollinators such as wild bees and thus improves the natural pollination of wild and cultivated plants in the surrounding area.

Contributes to erosion control on slopes.

Margins along watercourses or neighbouring plots reduce the drift of pesticides and fertilisers.

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## Further recommendations

On bad soil, pay attention to existing segetal flora and maintain it if necessary; on medium and rich soils, use regional, certified seed. Use a "dry" fringe mixture for dry sites and a "wet" fringe mixture for moist to wet sites.

Regularly check for undesirable species such as blackthorn or neophytes and cut them out.

Pull out the majority of spontaneously growing woody plants. Tolerate single individuals as breeding sites for birds.

Not on compacted and boggy soils and areas with many ryegrasses or problem plants such as creeping thistle, blackthorn, couch grass, bindweed and neophytes; along heavily frequented roads or footpaths.

Do not confuse with the herbaceous margin of hedges! The margin on arable land is created by sowing and can only be created on arable land.

Due to the high proportion of grasses in the mixture and the regular cuts, the weed risk in margins on arable land is low and is therefore well suited for organic farms.

## Further reading

[www.agridea.ch](http://www.agridea.ch)

## Sources

<https://www.fibl.org/fileadmin/documents/shop/1702-handbuch-biodiversitaet.pdf>

[DBU - Measures and species profiles to promote the diversity of typical species and habitats in the agricultural landscape | Publications](#)

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