

How to Hand Broadcast Seed

Hand broadcasting seed is a low cost and fun activity that can be done by staff and volunteers, with some training. This method is recommended for sites up to 10 hectares!

“Everyone can hand seed 10 hectares in a day” (Mary Gartshore).

There are two approaches to broadcasting seed:

- 1 Seed the whole mix at once.
- 2 Seed large seeds first, then re-cover the same area with small seeds (this method is preferred when mixes contain many small seeds because it ensures a more even rate of species distribution).

Seed broadcasting instructions:

- Divide your site by fractions such as halves or quarters to create sections.
- Use measuring tape and flags to mark the corners of the sections. Flagging tape may also be useful for visualizing lines.
- Divide your seed mix evenly by the number of sections (entire mix or separated large and small seeds).
- Separate the seed for each section into its own bucket or bin (figure 1).
- Hand broadcast each section by having staff or volunteers walk straight lines while flinging seed to one side every five steps (figure 2). This works best if you walk lines that are 10 metres apart. After the section has been covered by walking lines in one direction, measure and walk new lines that run perpendicular to the first. Again, fling seed every five steps.
- If seed is being broadcast by a single person, follow the chart in figure 3. Walk a “black line” pattern, followed by a “blue line” pattern within each section.
- After spreading the seed, it should be rolled (with a roller or cultipacker) or walked over to ensure good seed to soil contact.

Seed broadcasting tips:

- Use a broad sweeping throw for each handful of seed, like feeding chickens.
- Seed spreading can be enhanced by adding a light-coloured carrier like vermiculite to the seed mix, so it’s easier to see where seed has already been spread.
- It’s better to seed the site at a light rate and then add more seed, than to use all the seed at the start!



Figure 1: Divide seed mix evenly into separate containers for each section of the site.



Figure 2: Walk lines 10 metres apart to hand broadcast seed. Fling seed every five steps.

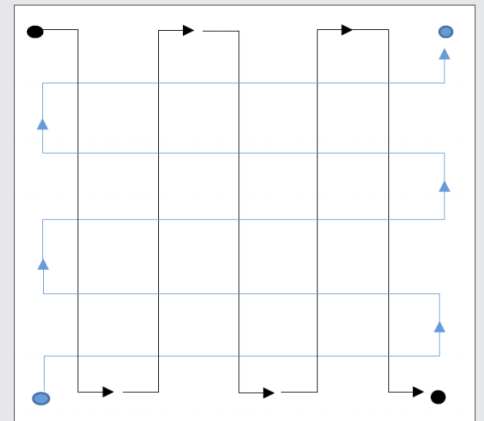


Figure 3: A single person can hand broadcast seed by walking these patterns in each section of the site. Walk the black line pattern first, then the blue line pattern.

More references

[VIDEO How-to: Seeding Methods for Wildflower Plantings](#)

[VIDEO People walking lines while hand broadcasting seed \(CWF\)](#)

[VIDEO Seeding from the back of a Kubota \(CWF\)](#)