

Maintenance Data

Sedum and Wildflower Plug Extensive Green Roof Systems

What to Expect From a Radmat Sedum and Wildflower Plug Extensive Green Roof System



There is a common misconception that Sedum and Wildflower Plug extensive green roofs are always green, or that from ground level appear to resemble grass: this is not accurate. They consist mainly of a mix of low growing drought tolerant Sedum's and Wildflowers that will bloom at varying times from April until September: including Oxeye Daisy, Lady's Bedstraw, Cat's Ear and Yellow Camomile, herbs such as Wild Marjoram, Thyme, Chives and flowering perennials such as Dianthus.

The appearance of planting will change along with the seasonal weather cycles and this is perfectly natural. It is also expected that more grass or moss may be present during the wetter months, simply because the conditions exist for these species of plant to exist. However, they will tend to die off during the dry summer months because the free-draining substrate does not hold sufficient moisture for these plants to survive

Another misconception is that extensive roofs are maintenance free: this is incorrect. They are 'low maintenance', but not 'no maintenance'.

Extensive roofs with specifically chosen wildflower plug plants (or hydro-planted) will require a deeper growing medium than a MedO Sedum roof, and will generally exhibit a greater variety of plant species that may also include grasses and herbs. Planted at a rate of 16 to 20 plants per m² a greater degree of dead vegetation following flowering is expected once the roof has matured (typically 2 to 3 growing seasons). A Wildflower and plug green roof will therefore need more maintenance to remove the dead seed heads than a Sedum green roof, typically twice a year.

In winter, the plant appears to shrink back and the leaves become small and tight. This is because the plant has sufficient water present in the substrate, but will hold little so it is able to withstand frost.

The following maintenance procedures will help you get the most out of your Radmat MedO Extensive Green Roofing System.

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Radmat Sedum and Wildflower Plug Extensive Green Roof General Maintenance

General maintenance is normally carried out annually during springtime. However, certain tasks e.g. the removal of weeds or accumulated leaf litter, may need to be done during the Autumn, depending to some extent upon the surrounding environment i.e. trees, dependent upon the location of the roof.

The following procedures should be carried out as indicated below, in order to ensure the roof is maintained in good condition and to protect the validity of the guarantee.

Basic roof related maintenance procedures:-

1. Ensure safe access can be gained to the roof and that relevant Health and Safety procedures are followed when working at roof level. Safety harness attachment points or man safe systems should always be used where provided.
2. Remove all debris and leaves from the roof surface, rainwater outlets, chutes, gutters, etc. All debris must be removed from the roof and not simply flushed down rainwater pipes. Roofs in the vicinity of taller trees will need more frequent maintenance. We recommend removing dead leaves during the spring and again in the autumn, to ensure that fallen leaves do not cover and suffocate the sedum plants.
3. Open the lid of the Inspection chambers and ensure that all rainwater outlets (including down pipes) are free from blockages and that water can flow freely.
4. Ensure that any protective metal flashings or termination bars remain securely fixed and in place.
5. Examine all mastic sealant and mortar pointing for signs of degradation, and repair or renew as necessary.
6. Where promenade tiles or paving slabs exist, ensure that they remain secure in position and in good condition.
7. Please ensure that any items of plant/equipment that may have been introduced to the roof, are sited on a suitable isolated slab and that any fixings that may have been used to secure them do not penetrate the waterproofing. Please contact Radmat for advice regarding suitability of slabs.
8. Report any signs of damage or degradation to Radmat immediately, so that arrangements can be made for remedial work to be carried out if necessary. It is recommended that a roof plan marked with co-ordinates be used to record the findings of the inspection. This will avoid confusion and provide an on-going record of roof performance, which can be compared year on year.
9. Works to adjoining areas - When carrying out maintenance to adjoining areas, care must be taken not to damage the system. For example, any solvent-based product allowed to wash down into the system will seriously de-stabilise the molecular structure of the bitumen causing it to fail. If this thought to be likely, then Radmat should be contacted so that they may advise. Chemical damage will invalidate the guarantee.
10. Alterations - Any alterations to the system that may affect its integrity will invalidate the guarantee. If such a situation should arise, then Radmat should be contacted so that they may advise on the alteration and how it should be incorporated without affecting the guarantee.

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Plant related maintenance tasks

Plant encroachment Any planting, which has encroached into drainage outlets, walkways and the vegetation barriers (pebbles), should be removed. This removed vegetation can be used to repair any bare patches if required (see below). If movement/settlement of the pebble vegetation barrier has occurred, then additional washed stone pebbles (similar to the existing) should be added.

Monitor the colour and rate of growth The colour and rate of growth should be examined to establish the health of the plants. It must be stressed that many things can affect the growth and colour of the plants. Generally, plants tend to be greener in wetter mild conditions (springtime) and where the roof pitch is shallow.

During May, June and July the plants flower and you will see a mixture of colours - whites, pinks, yellows, purples, oranges etc. Some species of sedum blush red naturally during the summer and autumn, (e.g. Sedum album 'coral carpet') and so the roof takes on a more 'red/brown appearance. This is particularly the case once plants have flowered, leaving remnants of dry brown seed heads. The best visible indication of health is if the leaves are fleshy and contain plenty of water.

Plants affected by a severe lack of water shrink back and the leaves will tend to be small and very tight. If an Irrigation system is fitted, it is best to run it only during prolonged dry weather for limited periods – see 'Irrigation' information below,

In shade, Sedums tend to grow greener and leggier. In general, sedums do not like permanent shade, so either avoid areas under larger trees or surrounded by buildings, or make it possible for more natural light to reach the roof. There may be noticeable differences in the growth of similar sedums in a different area of the same roof. This emphasises the living nature of each individual roof.

If problems are suspected, Radmat may be contacted for advice and if necessary, a suitable course of action.

Weeding The planting will, at times, include moss and grass. If considered excessive, provision should be made to remove any unwanted vegetation, e.g. weeds/ grasses/ saplings. These can be removed manually by hand, or by using a 'spot weed wipe', although care should be taken to follow specific instructions regarding the use of any proprietary products. Weeds are a problem of aesthetics rather than damaging the roof, but large areas of weed or grass should be removed, as should saplings. After removal of weeds treat area as if it were a bare patch (see below).

Please note access from following trades directly imposing load to the planting via regular foot traffic and loading of the materials will decimate the plants. Recovery will happen over time, which may be as long as a one to two year seasonable cycle, however the damage allows opportunity for grasses to invade from windblown seed from other environments. Please also note that local environments will encourage windblown seed to be introduced to your environment.

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Repairing Bare Patches

Bare patches can be repaired easily, but only during the growing season (ideally during March/April or late August until the end of September). Take clumps of plants from areas of abundant growth and place on bare patches pressing gently into the soil. They can then have a light sprinkling of sand mixed with compost or Radmat substrate to improve uptake of cuttings. The cuttings will grow best if this is carried out during spring maintenance and kept moist and free of temperature extremes (frost and intense sun). Compost or topsoil can be used for smaller bare patches, but contact Radmat for advice or to buy specialised substrate.

Irrigation (Sedum blanket systems on slopes > 9 degrees)

Sedum plants absorb and store water in their leaves. They use this water to survive during times of drought. A moisture retention fleece is incorporated into the system beneath the blanket, but the function of this is to hold water after rainfall for sufficient time for the plants to take on the water. It is not a water storage medium; so don't be concerned if it is dry.

Check the leaves to see if they are fleshy and not dried out. Generally speaking, sedum roofs require no artificial watering following establishment. However, for sedum blanket systems only, we recommend the installation of a 'leaky pipe' or drip line irrigation system where the roof pitch exceeds 9 degrees. Irrigation will ensure that water is readily available on steeper roofs during warm, dry weather where the thinner blanket systems are more prone to drying out due to wind and natural evaporation, particularly roofs with a south facing aspect.

Leaky pipe or drip line irrigation systems are relatively inexpensive and considering the unpredictable weather patterns over the past 15 years, we feel that this small additional cost is a really worthwhile investment to maintain your sedum roof finish in top condition.

Irrigation should only be activated during prolonged periods of hot, dry weather, or if the sedum plants are showing signs of distress. The irrigation system is best activated for 2-3 hours, preferably at dawn or dusk to minimize unnecessary evaporation. Then once every 4-6 days for the duration of the hot weather conditions. This can be achieved using an inexpensive battery powered programmable timer

Please note - continuous daily watering is neither recommended nor necessary, as this will only promote weeds and other unwanted plant species.

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Advice and Supply of Irrigation Equipment

Access Irrigation Ltd is one of the country's longest established irrigation specialists and has considerable experience in many types of irrigation, including green roofs. They are happy to provide irrigation advice on any Radmat project and can supply a wide range of irrigation products. Please contact:-

Access Irrigation Ltd,
Crick

Northampton
NN6 7XS

T: 01788 823811 F: 01788 824256 E: sales@access-irrigation.co.uk
www.access-irrigation.co.uk

Ongoing Support

Extensive roofs require only minimal maintenance and we are happy to offer advice on issues concerning your green roof and how to keep it in good order. We believe our products and systems are of the highest standard and we are happy to talk through any queries or concerns.

It can help greatly to provide a photograph to accompany any such queries.

Please note: In the event of any query arising which it is thought may affect the condition of the system, then Radmat should be contacted at the address below. We cannot accept responsibility for any problem or failure due to use outside those parameters for which the system was designed or 'acts of god' beyond our control e.g. extreme weather conditions or damage through pests.

This information given in good faith being based on the latest knowledge available to Radmat Building products Ltd. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the contents of the publication are current while going to press, customers are advised that products, techniques and codes of practice are under constant review and liable to change without notice. For further information on Radmat products and services please call 01858 410372, email techenquiries@radmat.com or visit our website www.radmat.com