



Mike Lizotte
American Meadows, Williston, Vermont

“WHERE CONFIDENCE GROWS” is American Meadows’ motto and promise, and Mike Lizotte, who runs the company along with partner Ethan Platt, has lived this maxim. Over two decades ago, at the age of 14, he began packing seeds for a local business on weekends, after school, and during the summers. By his early 20s he was managing the store. “I could identify all types of seeds before I even learned what the flowers looked like,” he recalls. Over the years of his increasing involvement with seeds it dawned on him, gradually, that this was his life’s passion.



When Mike moved to a suburban property a couple of years ago one of his first moves was to rip up 200 square feet of front lawn and put in a vegetable garden. “It’s for my 4-year old daughter Sadie,” he says with a smile. He tests perennials on his home landscape and also at the company headquarters in Williston, where the twenty-some full time and seasonal employees are welcome to work the raised beds, wildflower plantings, and vegetable garden. If any of the full-timers want to become certified Master Gardeners, the company pays for it.

American Meadows began in 2000 as an offshoot of a retail business. A couple of years later the owners sold the gift shop and wildflower farm where Mike Lizotte found his life's calling, and began to focus on creating a one-stop online resource for wildflower plants and seeds, bulbs, and information. The goal: to use their many years of experience with growing wildflowers to develop a national following. In 2008, they were proud to sell the company to Mike and his partner Ethan.



In 2013, American Meadows acquired High Country Gardens, now based in Colorado, a move that served to broaden the plant offerings and increase the knowledge base of the company. David Salman, High Country Gardens' founder, is well known for developing eco-friendly plants, and will continue as chief horticulturist of the division.

“It’s all about the consumer,” says Mike. “We give people the tools and products they need to succeed.” Visit the website and the focus on educational content—videos, blogs, step-by-step guides, photos—is evident. Customers respond with good reviews, and, Mike emphasizes, “people read reviews!” American Meadows does not grow its own seed, but rather sources products world-wide, and sells to large-scale commercial customers and municipalities as well as individual companies. Offerings range from vegetables, to annual and perennial flowers, to bulbs, to meadow mixes and grasses. You’ll even find a few tools and gifts on the website.



Mike’s priorities are simple, and include doing right by his customers and his family. Time management is a constant challenge, he admits; the trick is to be less “in the weeds” so he is more able to see the whole meadow. Once an avid golfer, he gave up the sport when he became a father, but still works out regularly to keep up his high energy level, and referees college ice hockey in the winter months. As for his personal and professional mission, Mike puts it simply: “We strive to do good through gardening.”

Three Mistakes Gardeners Make when Planting a Meadow

1. Inadequate soil preparation. Mike recommends a thorough rototilling in fall.
2. Covering wildflower seed too deeply with soil or mulch. Raking can cover seeds to a depth that will prevent germination.
3. Not reading instructions. All American Meadows’ seeds come with full planting instructions. Instructions are also on the website.