

Wooded meadows are one of the oldest ecosystems in the forest zone that have evolved through interactions between man and nature. These communities have offered means for living for more than a thousand years but nowadays they have disappeared almost from everywhere - only some tens of years has been enough for vanishing processes. The area of wooded meadows that has survived, corresponds approximately to an area of wooded meadows that once surrounded one western Estonian village.

In Estonian agricultural literature the term 'natural meadows' is used, but in plant ecology these communities are known as 'semi-natural communities'. An expression 'wooded meadow' is more common in scientific and specialised literature; local people mostly call these communities simply as 'meadows', 'woods', 'hay gardens' etc.

Wooded meadows are sparse natural wooded stands with regularly mowed herb layer. In terms of appearance and ecological conditions, wooded meadows are similar to parks, yet they are considerably older and initially arose from natural communities. Groups of trees and bushes of different species composition may be sparse or dense, but the presence of turf is characteristic of wooded meadows. Mowing is done usually every year. Wooded meadows can be subdivided in several ways: dry and moist meadows, species-poor and species-rich etc.

Wooded meadows were widespread in the Baltic Sea countries, especially in Estonia, Finland and Sweden. Fewer and less typical wooded meadows could be found in Norway, Denmark, Germany and in the mountains of Central Europe. Flooded wooded meadows were common on the banks of larger rivers in Lithuania and Latvia.

[See detailed overview in English about Estonian wooded meadows and wooded pastures and instructions for the management and restoration](#)

[See detailed overview in English about Estonian dry and fresh and paludified grasslands and instructions for the management and restoration](#)