

Dry stone wall

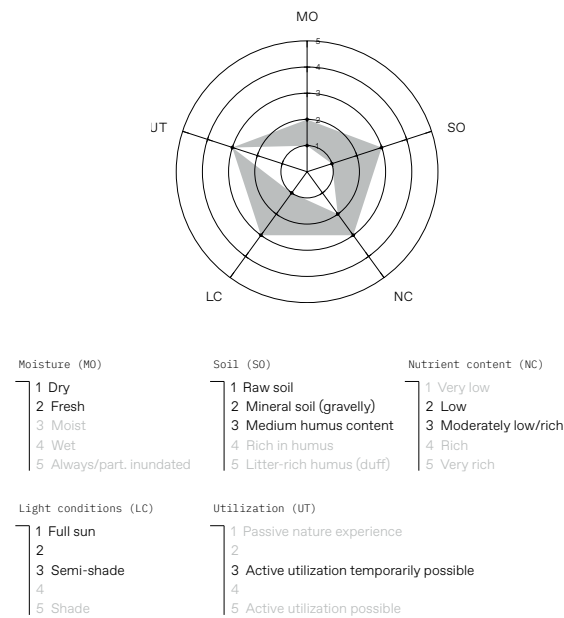
The interspaces in dry stone walls provide habitat and shelter to specialized plant and animal species.



Definition

Dry stone walls consist of natural stones layered next to each other. There are larger and smaller joints, gaps and cracks between the stones. These contain no mortar or other filling material.

Site requirements



Principles

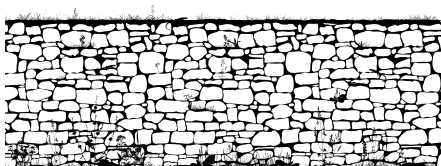
- Fulfilling these guidelines promotes the biodiversity of this habitat type.
- Seeds and planting material
 - > 80% domestic and site-appropriate species
 - As autochthonous as possible
 - High species diversity
 - 0% invasive non-native species
 - Structure
 - No nonwovens
 - Natural stones typical for the region
 - Ensure stability of materials used
 - Maintenance
 - If possible, managing the entire area according to the principles of near-natural maintenance
 - Only urgent maintenance and repair work
 - Site
 - South-facing slopes are particularly valuable
 - Utilization
 - Extensive use

Advanced requirements

- By fulfilling these requirements, the biodiversity of this habitat type is additionally promoted.
- Seeds and planting material
 - 100% native and site-appropriate species
 - Only wild and local, no cultivated forms
 - Minimum size
 - > 5 m²
 - Maintenance
 - 100% of the area in accordance with the principles of near-natural maintenance

Biodiversity effect

- If the habitat is planned, realized, and maintained as described, it has the following potential to benefit biodiversity:
- high = ●●●●● low = ● negative = (●)
- Ecological connectivity
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 - Habitat for wildlife
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 - Habitat for wild plants
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 - Ecological compensation
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Planning

- Preserve existing valuable dry stone walls
- Plan near-natural habitats in the immediate surrounding
- Install dry stone walls in sunny sites with stable subsoil
- Create ideal conditions for animals and native plants
- Consider possibilities for moderate and temporary utilization
- Use regional natural stones or recycled material if possible
- Do not seal the base of the wall but instead use gravel, crushed stone, or recycled substrates
- Plant the dry stone wall with native and site-appropriate plants

Implementation

- Accurate technical execution and compliance with quality standards
- Prevent or eliminate waterlogging
- Foundation widths on both sides > 10% wider than the width of the base of the wall
- Retaining walls: > 20 cm thick foundation with frost-proof material on existing soil
- Water stability by increasingly smaller grain size of the backfill
- No nonwovens as filter
- Use stones from the site or from local quarries
- Use native and site-appropriate plant species
- Build wall between November and March

Maintenance

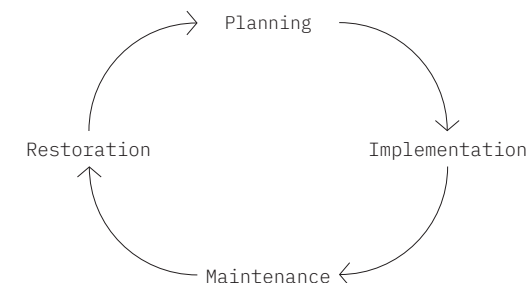
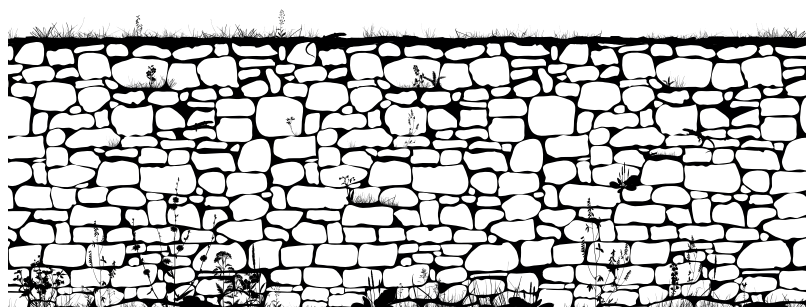
- Gently remove plants in highly overgrown sections if needed, tolerate light vegetation cover
- Carry out maintenance and repair work between April and October
- Regular visual inspections
- Remove invasive non-native species
- No pesticide use

Restoration

- Preserve valuable plants
- Reutilization of materials where possible

Climatic requirements

No specific requirements and suitable for almost all temperatures. Sites can range from sunny to shaded as different plants will establish depending on the conditions. Not suitable for regular frost/thawing. Warm and sunny locations are most beneficial for high biodiversity and characteristic species.



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Example in Cham, Switzerland (Manuela Hotz)



Example in Meyrin, Switzerland (fokus-n)



Common wall lizard (Adobe Stock)



Asplenium ruta-muraria (Adobe Stock)