“Expanding wilds” sounds straightforward: a wild symbol grows and helps make winning combinations. But the label alone does not tell you when it grows, how much of the reel it covers, or whether it can substitute for every symbol. Those details are in the game rules and paytable—and they can vary from one slot to another.

Before watching the animations, check the paytable and rules. A wild that fills a reel may look similar across two games, but the trigger, covered positions and win evaluation can be different. This guide explains what to look for, including the **trigger for expansion**, the **extent of expansion** and the **evaluation timing**.

Start with the paytable, not the animation

An animation can show a wild spreading across a reel, but it does not necessarily explain the game’s full conditions. Look for the help screen or rules page, then compare its feature description with the paytable. The paytable tells you which symbols form wins and what those wins are worth; the rules explain how the expanding wild behaves.

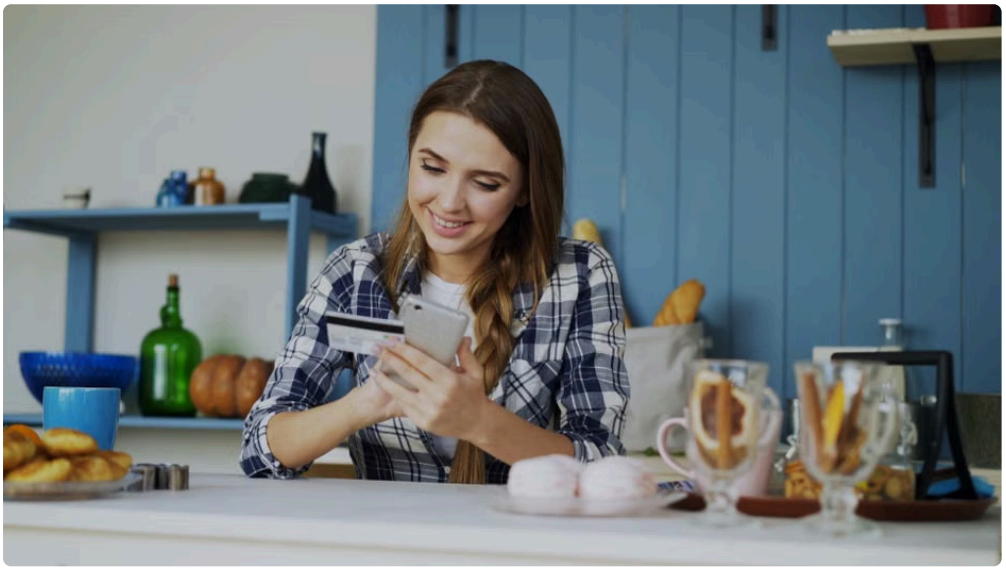
Check whether the information applies to the base game, a bonus round or both. A feature may work differently in free spins, or it may only be available in a particular mode. If the rules are brief, look for an information button, a separate feature guide or a clearly labelled paytable section.

1. Find the trigger for expansion

The **trigger for expansion** is the condition that makes a wild grow. Do not assume it expands whenever it lands. The rules may say that expansion happens:

- whenever a particular wild symbol appears;
- only when the wild lands on a specified reel;
- only during free spins or another bonus feature;
- when a certain number of wilds appears; or
- after another event, such as a feature symbol or bonus trigger.

Look for the exact wording and any conditions around it. For example, “wilds expand on reels 2, 3 and 4 during free spins” is more specific than “wilds can expand.” The second statement leaves important questions unanswered: which reels are eligible, whether the feature is limited to a bonus round, and whether every wild expands.





Also check whether the game describes the feature as guaranteed or conditional. “May expand” does not mean “will expand.” If the rules do not give a probability, do not try to infer one from the animation or a short demonstration.

2. Check the extent of expansion

The **extent of expansion** describes how far the wild spreads. It might cover the full reel, occupy a fixed number of positions, or extend only to neighbouring spaces. Some games show an expanding wild that fills a reel from top to bottom; others use “expanding” for a smaller change in the symbol’s footprint.

Look for clear details such as:

- whether the wild covers the whole reel or only part of it;
- whether expansion can happen on one or several reels in the same spin;
- whether the expanded wild stays in place for the rest of that spin;
- whether it can appear on every reel or only named reels; and
- whether the expanded symbol remains active in later spins.

Do not confuse an expanded wild with a sticky wild. An expanded wild describes its size or coverage. A sticky wild generally stays in position for more than one spin. A game may combine these behaviours, but the rules need to say so. If they do not, do not assume that a wild remains on the reels after the spin ends.

3. Understand evaluation timing

Evaluation timing means when the game checks for winning combinations in relation to the expansion. The rules may state that a wild expands before wins are evaluated, after symbols land, or as part of a feature sequence. That order matters because it can determine whether the expanded positions count toward a win on that spin.

Look for wording such as “expands before wins are calculated” or “wins are evaluated after the wild expands.” If the rules only describe the animation, they may not make the order clear. In that case, avoid treating a visual sequence as proof of the game’s calculation. Check the full rules or ask the casino’s support team for clarification.

Also check whether wins are evaluated once or in stages. A game might evaluate a regular win, then apply a feature, or it might expand the wild first and calculate all wins afterwards. The rules should explain whether the feature can create a new combination, change an existing one or affect both.

4. Learn how ordinary symbols form wins

Expanding wilds only make sense in the context of the game's ordinary symbols and win evaluation. Check the paytable for the regular symbols, the number needed for a win, and any minimum bet or play conditions that apply. A wild may help complete a combination, but it does not tell you by itself what counts as a combination.

Pay attention to whether wins need to start from a particular reel, follow a line, appear on neighbouring reels or form a group. The same set of symbols can be a win under one system and not a win under another. This is why the line diagram or win rules matter as much as the symbol artwork.

Paylines

In a paylines game, symbols generally need to appear along one of the game's displayed paylines. The line may run across the reels in a straight or angled pattern. Check how many lines are active and whether the rules require a winning sequence to begin on the leftmost reel. Do not assume every matching group anywhere on the screen pays.

Adjacent pays

In an adjacent-pays game, matching symbols may need to appear on consecutive reels, often starting from the left. The exact direction and minimum number of reels should be stated in the rules. Adjacency is not the same as appearing anywhere on the screen: gaps or symbols on non-consecutive reels may break a sequence.

Cluster pays

In a cluster-pays game, a win is usually based on a connected group of matching symbols rather than a fixed line. Check what counts as connected—horizontal, vertical, or both—and how many matching symbols persistent symbols slots are required. The rules may also explain whether winning symbols disappear and new symbols fall into their places.

An expanding wild can interact differently with each system. It may fill a position on a payline, extend an adjacent sequence or join a cluster. Read the win conditions first, then check whether the wild is included in the same way as ordinary symbols.

5. Read the wild substitution rules and exclusions

Wilds commonly substitute for some regular symbols, but "wild" does not always mean "substitutes for everything." Check the rules for exclusions. A wild may not substitute for scatter symbols, bonus symbols or special symbols. It may also be unable to help form a particular feature trigger.

Look for an explicit list or statement about what the wild can replace. If the rules say it substitutes for all regular symbols, that still may not include scatters or bonus symbols. Never assume scatters pay "anywhere" or that a wild can replace them unless the paytable or rules say so. Scatter payouts and bonus triggers have their own conditions.

Check whether the wild itself has a payout. Some games award wins for matching wilds; others use wilds only as substitutes. Also note any restrictions on where it can land, whether it can appear during a feature, and whether it

can combine with other special symbols.

6. Check what happens after the spin

Expansion rules should clarify whether the wild resets after the current spin. A standard expanding wild may cover part of a reel for one evaluation and then disappear when the reels reset. A persistent or sticky wild may remain for additional spins, but that is a separate behaviour that should be stated in the rules.

For bonus rounds, check whether the feature retriggers and whether expanding wilds carry over between free spins. Do not treat "available during free spins" as proof that a wild persists from one free spin to the next. The rules should distinguish between expansion within a single spin and a wild staying in place across multiple spins.

7. Do not use the theme as a substitute for the rules

Two slots can share a theme, art style or feature name without sharing identical mechanics. A "growing" or "expanding" wild in one game might fill a reel; another game might expand by one position or only during a bonus round. The visuals may suggest how the feature works, but they do not establish the trigger, coverage or payout conditions.

This matters when comparing games on casino sites such as MrQ. Treat each slot's own rules and paytable as the source for that game, rather than assuming a familiar feature behaves the same way elsewhere. A casino's game listing or promotional description can be useful for finding a title, but it may not include every condition from the in-game help screen.

8. What if the scraped content has no prices?

A common mistake in scraped slot content is to see that **no prices are mentioned** and then fill in the missing details from guesswork. In a slot article, "prices" may mean symbol payouts or paytable values. If those figures are absent, do not invent them, copy values from another game, or imply that an expanding wild has a particular cash value.

Instead, state that the scraped material does not provide the payout figures and direct readers to the game's own paytable. If the source also omits the trigger, reel positions or exclusions, say that those details are not available in the material you reviewed. Missing information is not evidence of a rule.

Regulatory context does not replace game-specific rules. The Malta Gaming Authority (MGA) is a gambling regulator, but a general reference to the MGA does not tell a player how a particular wild works. Likewise, a casino's regulatory information is not a substitute for checking the slot's own help screen. Keep claims about regulation separate from claims about feature mechanics.

A quick checklist before you play

1. **Trigger for expansion:** What exact event makes the wild expand?
2. **Reel positions:** Which reels or positions can contain an expanding wild?
3. **Extent of expansion:** Does it fill a reel, cover a fixed number of spaces or extend another way?
4. **Evaluation timing:** Does expansion happen before wins are calculated?
5. **Win system:** Are wins based on paylines, adjacent reels or clusters?
6. **Substitution:** Which ordinary symbols can the wild replace?

7. **Exclusions:** Are scatters, bonus symbols or feature triggers excluded?
8. **Reset and retrigger:** Does the wild disappear after the spin, persist, or carry into later spins?
9. **Paytable:** Are symbol values and feature payouts actually shown?

Bottom line

"Expanding wilds" is a feature label, not a complete explanation. Before relying on it, confirm the trigger for expansion, the extent of expansion and the evaluation timing. Then check how ordinary symbols win, whether the game uses paylines, adjacent pays or clusters, and which symbols the wild cannot replace.

If the rules or scraped content leave out a detail—especially payout values—do not fill the gap with assumptions. Use the game's own paytable and rules, and treat the animation as illustration rather than evidence of mechanics. That is the clearest way to tell what an expanding wild actually does in a particular slot.