

No mow May A peace offering to nature



The traditional English lawn is thick, short and deep green without a single flower. It requires high maintenance: frequent mowing, fertilizer, weed killer and lots of watering during dry spells. It is - forgive me - from the perspective of nature just one step away from astro turf. Even earth worms, these maintainers and indicators of healthy soil, are unwelcome.

What nature needs to thrive is variety of habitat: long and short mixed vegetation, native hedges and trees with blossom, berries and nuts, even some bare patches and water bodies in sun and shade. Decaying deadwood, some leaves and twigs left under hedges are of great benefit. This will attract invertebrates, birds, bats, hedgehogs, dormice, slow worms, toads etc. and your garden will increasingly host wildlife!

A first step towards more biodiversity can be to mow less often, especially during May-June and to cut the grass higher. If you start off with one or two shorter cuts in April, the wildflowers will produce stunted growth and the higher cuts later on will spare a lot of low blossom: daisies, clover, a few dandelions, speedwell, bugle etc. will just appear as colourful spots - to benefit insects!

Why not try and set your mower an inch higher and mow at longer intervals? Watch the results over time and enjoy nature returning! Also remember: watering an established lawn during a drought is an unnecessary luxury. Grass will always turn green again at the next proper rain.