



Memorandum

To: Mayor Nelson and Members of the City Council

From: Daniel R. Buchholtz, MMC, Administrator, Clerk/Treasurer

Date: March 13, 2023

Subject: No Mow May Initiative

Councilmember Moran asked that the City Council discuss the “No Mow May” initiative at a future work session.

No Mow May is a conservation initiative that encourages people to stop mowing or mow less often for the month of May to create habitat and provide resources for bees and other early-season pollinators. The City would refrain from enforcing the 9” long grass nuisance ordinance during the month of May.

Pros and Cons of Adopting “No Mow May”:

Pros

- Avoiding mowing protects overwinter habitat for native bees
- Provides a source of nutrients to pollinators at a time when they need it most
- A health and more biodiverse pollinator population helps Minnesota’s urban landscapes and statewide agriculture thrive
- Creates a reduction in small engine use (in May)

Cons

- Increased complaints about un-manicured lawns.
- Possible increased staff time (property registrations, backlog of inspections)
- Increased spread of dandelions, thistle, clover, violet and other “weed species”
- Rodent, tick population increase
- Justification for not mowing property
- Additional small engine use (in June)

Cities participating in No Mow May include: Edina, Crystal, Brooklyn Park, St. Louis Park, West St. Paul, Vadnais Heights, North Mankato, Mounds View, Monticello, Bemidji, Rochester, Savage, Roseville, Albertville, Columbia Heights, St. Peter, Redwing and South St Paul.

The City has incorporated pollinator friendly habitats into improvement projects. The City has planted pollinator friendly natural plantings around the Fillmore Street and Garfield Street storm water ponds after dredging projects. The City received a grant to plant natural plantings around the Triangle Park storm water pond, which will be planted this spring. Another consideration is

that a yard without flowering plants will not benefit bees while one rich in a diversity of native species will attract many bees.

Other cities have implemented “No Mow May” by:

- Starting with a one-year trial period.
- Requiring residents to register with the city prior to a date specific (e.g. May 15) to be a participant in the “No Mow May” program. Only registered properties would be exempt from weed ordinance enforcement during the month of May.
- Handing out signs to residents for placement in their yards advertising participation in the program.
- Once “No Mow May” is complete, identifying a date specific for properties to be brought back into compliance.

If the City Council wishes to implement the program, the Council will need to identify the parameters of the program. If the Council does not wish to implement the program, the City should make a statement to that effect on the City’s website.

Staff has included information from the City of Edina on their “No Mow May” initiative.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 763-784-6491.

No Mow May

Registration is now open for No Mow May 2023. Sign up by May 1st to reserve your yard sign. Registration closes May 15th, 2023.

Participate in Edina's 2nd annual No Mow May program! No Mow May encourages residents who live in owner-occupied or rented properties to allow flowering plants to bloom that provide habitat and nutrition for early-season pollinators by pausing mowing their lawn during the month of May. Following the success of Edina's inaugural event in 2022, City Council passed a Resolution of Support for No Mow May in 2023, temporarily suspending its turf and weed ordinances related to lawn height for participating properties. Properties must come back into compliance by June 15, 2023.

Registration closes May 15th for the 2023 No Mow May program! Sign up by May 15th to ensure your yard is included in No Mow May this year.

Yard signs will be available to those who register by May 1st, 2023. In order to register, participants must be logged in to a BetterTogether account—those interested in participating who do not have an account can create one for free [here](#). Participants who register by May 1st can pick up their yard sign on the following Wednesdays (April 5th, April 12th, April 19th, April 26th, and May 3rd) from 8:00am-12:00pm at Edina City Hall in the main foyer (*limit one per household). Signs will be available to registrants after May 1st on a first-come first-serve basis, as quantity is limited. Have a sign from last year? **Reuse it!**

Pollinator Workshops: Interested in learning more ways you can help? Learn the [basics of planting and maintaining a bee lawn\(External link\)](#), or register for any of the following workshops as part of Edina's No Mow May Webinar Series - registration required:

- **Resilient Yards:** [Thursday, May 11th at 6:00 pm](#)
- **Pollinator Plantings:** [Thursday, May 18th at 6:00 pm](#)
- **Turf Alternatives:** [Tuesday, May 23rd at 6:00pm](#)

** Residents: After entering your information and Edina address, a coupon code will be automatically applied and mandatory payment will be dismissed. * Non-residents: cost is \$15 per workshop.*

Missed out on Edina No Mow May signs? Participants can print a free sign from [Bee City USA's No Mow May website](#)([External link](#)) to display.

Want to know what to do with your sign after May? **Save it!** The sign is meant to be used for multiple years, so consider stowing it in a closet, garage or basement after May, for future use in the years to come. If you don't expect to participate in No Mow May again, consider dropping off your sign at the Edina Public Works' front desk (7450 Metro Blvd), so that it can be reused.

Benefits of No Mow May: Participating in No Mow May supports all of Minnesota's pollinators - Minnesota pollinators include native bees, butterflies, ants, flies, beetles, birds and more! Avoid mowing in early spring and during the month of May to protect overwinter habitat for threatened bee populations and other pollinators, while allowing flowering plants to grow rich in nectar and other key nutrients that serve as food for our pollinator friends during a time when needed most. In urban areas, like Edina, pollinator habitat and food sources are relatively sparse this time of year—by joining No Mow May, you can help support the health and diversity of native pollinator populations by providing the resources needed for pollinators to thrive.

June - Return to Mow Tips: When you start mowing again in June, learn from the UMN about [mowing best practices for a healthy lawn](#)([External link](#)). Best practices for bringing your grass back down to a reasonable height while keeping it healthy include:

- Mow late in the day or when grass is dry
- Mow down in small increments (never more than 1/3 of grass blade's height at one time)
- Rake up excessive clippings to prevent them from going into streets. This protects your local water quality and keeps storm drains clear.

To Help Pollinators Year-round:

- Mow less – instead of mowing your lawn every single week, or even multiple times a week, mow every 2 to 3 weeks. Mowing stresses your grass and creates unhealthy lawns if mowed too frequently. Lawns mowed every 3 weeks can have as much as 2.5x more lawn flowers, and support a greater number of pollinators ([UMass-Amherst, 2018](#)).
- Mow higher – consider keeping your lawn 3.5-4.5” inches in height. Taller grass holds more moisture, is less prone to stress, and better hides plants like clover and dandelion that pollinators need.
- Water your lawn about 1” (in volume) per week in the early morning or late evening, and avoid watering during rain events.
- Water your lawn all at once rather than in smaller quantities more frequently. This can disrupt pollinators and other insects, and stress your lawn during periods of drought.
- Allow some flowering plants to persist in your lawn; tolerate clover and dandelions. To provide plenty of food sources from spring and throughout fall, avoid de-weeding your entire yard – no need to pull up all those 'evil' patches of clover or rid your lawn of all those 'pesky' dandelions. These are a favorite food source for many of MN's threatened pollinators, including several bee species.
- Limit or cease use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Use organic sources sparingly instead.
- Ready to re-seed your grass lawn? Consider prioritizing fine fescue over Kentucky bluegrass. Fine fescue is slow growing, while KY bluegrass requires more frequent mowing.
- Consider applying for Minnesota's [Lawns to Legumes](#) program.

Program Registration

Register for No Mow May - 2023

189 responses

Register Today to participate in Edina's 2023 No Mow May program!

Residential properties that are owner-occupied or occupied by renters who receive landlord consent can participate. All other properties must comply with Edina's City Code related to turf and weed management. The program allows residents of owner-occupied or rented homes to avoid mowing their lawns for the month of May, to support pollinators in the community. Once registered, participants can pick up a yard sign from Edina City Hall to show their support for No Mow May (*signs are subject to availability after May 1st, 2023).

Missed out on a No Mow May sign this year? Participants can print a free sign from [Bee City USA's No Mow May website](#) to display.

COMPLETE REGISTRATION

CLOSED: Registration for 2022 No Mow May has concluded.

2022 Registration [CLOSED]

1182 responses

As of May 15th, 2022 Registration for this year's No Mow May program has **CLOSED.**

Thanks to all for participating in the program's inaugural year!

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COMPLETE REGISTRATION

Who's Listening

Grace Hancock

Sustainability Manager
City of Edina

Phone 952-826-1621

Email ghancock@EdinaMN.gov



Janet Canton

Parks & Recreation Administration
City of Edina

Phone 952-826-0367

Email jcanton@edinamn.gov



Helpful Documents

[Pollinator-Friendly Plants \(2.12 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Noxious Weeds to Avoid \(1.02 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[Benefits of No Mow May \(1.57 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[City Council Resolution 2023-12 No Mow May \(776 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[City Council Resolution 2020-42 Supporting Pollinators \(262 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[2022 Inaugural Year](#)

[City Council Resolution 2022-34 No Mow May \(775 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

[No Mow May 2022 \(15.6 KB\) \(docx\)](#)

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BENEFITS OF A POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY YARD!



1. Can be a rest stop for pollinators as they migrate and search for food.



2. Provides a healthy habitat for pollinators & songbirds, helping increase biodiversity.



3. Native plants help sequester carbon and have long roots that help retain & filter water.



Learn more from the DNR about the benefits of growing native plants by scanning this QR code!



POLLINATOR FAVORITES: NATIVE PLANTS



Wild Bergamot

Easy to grow, fragrant foliage is mint-scented, bearing large, lilac-colored blooms



Butterfly Weed

Attract a handful of butterfly species with this long-lasting, vibrant bloomer



Common Yarrow

A must-have in any pollinator garden, hardy and drought-tolerant



Black-eyed Susan

Classic and eye-catching, these bright yellow flowers will keep blooming midsummer through the first frost.



Columbine

Early bloomer attracts hummingbirds, well suited for a variety of growing conditions



Showy Goldenrod

The bees will flock to your yard for these tall, late-season bloomers



What are the benefits of using native plants?

- Found to support greater abundance & diversity of bees, butterflies, and other kinds of wildlife.
- Studies have shown they support up to 15 times as many caterpillars compared to non-native plants.
- They are better adapted to local conditions, meaning they are often easier to grow & more likely to survive.

Leave the Weeds, Help Feed the Bees!



Common Milkweed

Monarch butterflies depend on milkweed - it is the sole food source for their larvae & is only plant they lay their eggs on.

Dandelion

Have one of the longest flowering seasons of any plant!

Clover

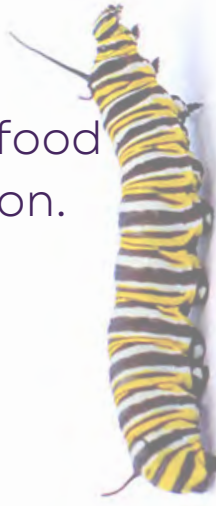
This low growing plant often grows in patches and among grass.

Yellow Wood Sorrel

Often considered a weed, but not in the eyes of pollinators.

Chickweed

Nutrient rich plant with small, white, star-shaped flowers.



AVOID THESE PLANTS & WEEDS!



Crabgrass

Spreads quickly and can easily overtake lawns.



European Buckthorn

Outcompetes native species, fast growing and difficult to manage.



Garlic Mustard

Can impede natural forest regeneration.



Bull Thistle

Spikey and painful to touch, grows quickly and is hard to control.



Common Tansy

Degrades pastures and impedes reforestation efforts, can be toxic if ingested.



Creeping Charlie

Its dense matting form can displace other ground plant cover.



Amur Silver Grass

Its horizontal root systems crowd out other plants.



**Learn more about invasive plants
from the Minnesota Department of
Natural Resources!**