

What is No Mow May?

The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow un-mown for the month of May, creating habitat and forage for early season pollinators. This is particularly important in urban areas where floral resources are often limited.

Enhancing Our Communities by Supporting Native Pollinators in Our Parks and Other Public Spaces

Plants and wildlife, including pollinators, can thrive in the seemingly inhospitable environment of towns and cities. Studies done from around the country have shown that dozens of species of bees can be found in gardens and parks in areas that are dominated by hardscapes such as Berkeley, California, and East Harlem in New York. In some cases, towns and cities are also important strongholds for rare species like the rusty patched bumble bee.

Pollinator-friendly parks are also human-friendly as they support physical and emotional benefits gained from time spent outdoors. They are excellent settings for guided group activities such as nature watching, whether that is for birds, butterflies, dragonflies, or bees. And they allow for quiet contemplation while sitting among flowers and the hum of insect life.

About Native Pollinators

Bees transfer pollen between flowers, enabling the incredible diversity of plants on our planet to fruit and reproduce. Pollinators are keystone species in essentially every ecosystem on earth, facilitating the reproduction

of over 85 percent of all flowering plants and over two thirds of agricultural crops. In addition to the domestic honey bee (*Apis mellifera*), a species brought to North America from Europe, there are more than 3,600 species of bees native to the United States. These wild bees are generally quite different than the domesticated honey bee—most of them live solitary lives, with a single female doing all of the work to build a nest, collect pollen and nectar, and lay eggs. Unlike the honey bee, which nests above-ground and can be managed in wooden hives, more than two out of three wild bees live underground in nests that can be hard to spot from the surface! Some dig down and lay their eggs several feet below ground, while others make nests near the soil surface or in hollowed out plant stems above ground. Research has shown significant declines in native pollinator population sizes and ranges globally with up to 40 percent of pollinator species on Earth at risk of extinction in the coming years as a result a variety of environmental stressors including habitat loss and degradation, exposure to pesticides, diseases and pathogens, and climate change.

Benefits to Your Community

Ensure survival of vital animal species including bees and other pollinators crucial to the health of our environment. Build community locally and nationally through bringing your campus together around a positive, shared cause and connect with communities across the country that have made the same commitment. Improve local food production and raise community awareness of how our food grows. Support small, local businesses including native plant nurseries and pollinator-friendly landscaping. Address pest problems with fewer pesticides using integrated pest management. Heighten awareness of biological diversity.

