No Mow May started in the UK by the group, Plantlife, and is now a global effort to support pollinators by reducing mowing of grass lawns to allow lawn weeds, such as white clover, dandelions, and violets to bloom to serve as early forage for native bees and pollinators as they first emerge from hibernation. Research in both the UK and the US has found that simple changes in mowing can result in enough nectar for ten times more bees and other pollinators. A recent study from Lawrence University in Wisconsin found that No Mow May lawns had five times the number of bees and three times the bee species than did mown parks. This is important as native bee species are stressed and at risk.

Native bees are considered the most important group of pollinators in terms of transferring pollen from flower to flower, but pollinators also include butterflies, moths, honeybees, and other insects. Native bees pollinate apples, cherries and blueberries more effectively than honeybees because they will forage for longer during the day, and will visit flowers in wet or cold conditions, when honeybees tend to stay in the hive. One could say that like other Vermont natives, bees work harder and longer than bees that "come from away".

Participating in No Mow May (or Low Mow Spring) is as simple as reducing mowing in early Spring, or throughout the summer season, or could also include a dedicated patch of ground for native plants or flowers, or even a patio garden.

You can show your neighbors your participation and start a conversation about pollinator gardens by posting a sign, available at either of these links:

https://www.xerces.org/publications/other/no-mow-may

https://www.plantlife.org.uk/campaigns/nomowmay/#free-downloads-posters-signs--activities

Resources for further pollinator conservation efforts anywhere in the US are available here:

https://www.xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center

Below are some frequently asked questions that can help you get started with No Mow May or establishing a pollinator habitat on your property, more information is available at *beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/*

I would like to participate in No Mow May but my community has rules that restrict me from letting my lawn grow unmown. What do you recommend that I do?
If letting your lawn grow is not possible due to your community's landscaping rules, there are several other options for making your yard, patio, or balcony more pollinator-friendly. You can reduce the amount of lawn that is turfgrass and fill those areas with landscaping full of plants that provide host plants, nectar, pollen, nesting materials, nest sites, and shelter from harsh weather. Even a window box or planter can be a place to provide more habitat and resources for pollinators. You could also revisit the vegetation policies of your HOA or local government. As attitudes change around sustainability topics such as mowing, pesticide use, and native landscaping, restrictive landscaping rules are increasingly out of step with the growing numbers of residents like yourself who want to plant and care for their yards and community green spaces in ways that are healthy and attractive for pollinators, wildlife, and people.

Is the month of May the best time in my region to let my lawn grow?
No Mow May began in Britain and what works there doesn't necessarily work in all parts of the U.S. In some regions, May is fine, but the vast geographic size of this country means that we have huge regional variation in the timing of bee emergence, in other areas it may not be the best time. Keeping an eye out for early season bees and growth of plants in your yard is a great way to judge when it would be most beneficial to reduce mowing (No Mow April? Low Mow Spring?).

How can I shrink or replace my lawn?
Here's a quick "lasagna" method to smother grass: Cut grass short, but leave the clippings. Completely cover grass with clean, tape-free cardboard (no gaps) and wet it down. Top with a thick layer of wood chips. Contact your local arborists for free or cheap wood chips. Another successful method is solarization using plastic sheeting. You'll find details about these and other approaches in the Xerces Society's guidelines, Organic Site Preparation for Wildflower Establishment. You can add native pollinator plants at any time, from flowers to shrub to trees.

Where flowers bloom, so does hope" – Lady Bird Johnson