

KENT'S PLAN BEE



April 2023 Newsletter - No Mow May Special

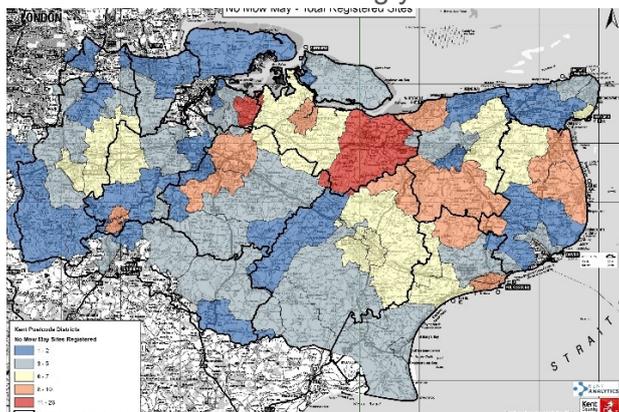
Kent's Plan Bee "No Mow May Pledge" Site Re-opens for 2023

If you haven't already, it's time to put away the lawnmower and strimmer, sit back, relax, and tune in to the gentle hum of your local pollinators.

What is No Mow May?

'No Mow May' is a campaign by the charity Plantlife to let your lawn grow throughout May and provide a carpet of flowers for our pollinators to feed on. Why not give it a go this year to see what colourful flowers appear and the pollinators that they attract? Even leaving a small patch of your lawn uncut will make a big difference. For more information visit the [Plantlife website](https://www.plantlife.org.uk).

If you complete May and want to continue not mowing, you can leave your lawn uncut into June, even July and August. This will allow the flowers to continue to bloom and go to seed, giving you more flowers for the following year.



Heatmap of Kent with locations of those who took part in No Mow May 2022. Hotspots were in Faversham and Gillingham

- ✿ 352 pledges were received from 336 residents and 16 organisations.
- ✿ The total area of land pledged to be left uncut amounted to over 14 hectares or 35 acres, which roughly equates to almost 500 tennis courts!
- ✿ On a District basis, the highest area of land pledged was in Swale, and the largest individual numbers of pledges were recorded in Swale and Canterbury.

But this year, we want to make it bigger and better! Can we pledge more land than last year? Which District will record the most pledges this time? Make sure to share your pledge with your family, friends, and neighbours to get them involved and make this No Mow May even bigger than last year! Visit <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/plan-bee> today and enter your pledge to be part of the campaign.

As well as our pledge site, this month on [our Facebook page](#) we will be bringing you tips for improving your lawn for wildflowers, along with what Kent County Council are doing for No Mow May (read the article on the next page for a sneak peek into KCC's No Mow May Sites). And at the end of May, don't forget to take part in Plantlife's Every Flower Counts survey to see which flowers are growing in your lawn!



Photo credits to Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Make the No Mow May Pledge today and show your support for Kent's wildflowers and pollinators

No Mow May Pledge Site

We want to know if you are taking part in No Mow May this year. As part of raising awareness for the Plantlife campaign, our pledge site on our [Let's Talk website](#) has been re-opened for 2023 so Kent residents and organisations taking part in No Mow May can say where in the county you are leaving your lawn uncut for May. Whether a garden or allotment, or you're a business or landowner looking to pledge a larger piece of land, we want to hear what you have planned!

This is the second year we are running the survey. Last year's results revealed that:



Image Credit: Plantlife

Kent County Council's No Mow May Sites

Kent County Council (KCC) is introducing new sites to be included this year in its No Mow May campaign, allowing wildflowers to blossom, grow and help precious pollinating insects to feed, nest, and breed. In total, 13 new KCC locations have been put forward for No Mow May this year, which join the areas left for conservation efforts by Highways set up in previous years.

Country Parks

Six of KCC's Country Parks are joining the No Mow May campaign by allowing more than 50 hectares (over 123 acres) to flourish – being managed specifically for valuable habitats and features favoured by rare wildflowers and insects.

Look out for:

- The wildflower meadows and pond areas for pollinators, plus solitary bee holes in fence posts at Brockhill Country Park.
- A combination of grazing and mechanical cutting to create the conditions for wildflowers to thrive at Trosley Country Park.
- Grazing of Cheviot goats at Preston Hill next to Lullingstone Country Park. Also, the pollinator picnic tables next to the meadow!



Wildflower meadows at Brockhill Country Park



Acid/neutral grassland verge RNR near Tunbridge Wells

Highways

More than 450km of road verges in rural and urban areas across Kent are managed specifically for conservation, by KCC Highways. This includes Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs). These verges provide invaluable habitat corridors for wildflowers, pollinating insects, and other wildlife.

Look out for:

- The neutral grassland verge of the Tonbridge RNR which provides an important flower rich steppingstone for pollinators in an urban environment.
- The acid/neutral grassland verge RNR near Tunbridge Wells that supports many pollinators and other invertebrates through its wildflower diversity.
- Oxeye daisies & a huge diversity of wildflowers at the RNR near Maidstone.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

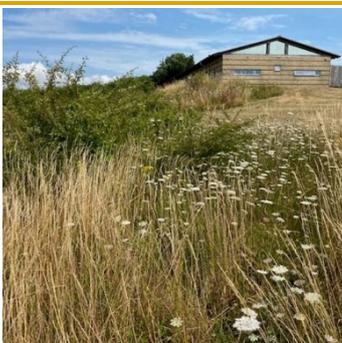
Five Household Waste Recycling Centres with valuable grassland areas will be allowed to grow throughout May.

Look out for:

- A wide grassy verge to the entrance of Margate Household Waste Recycling Centre, with planters and bug boxes made from recycled materials.
- An area of neutral improved grassland at Dover Refuse Transfer Station that is part of site used to welcome school groups learning about recycling, and hopefully soon biodiversity!
- Three pockets of semi-improved grassland and verges within the New Romney Household Waste Recycling Centre, kept short by rabbit grazing.



Planters and bug boxes at Margate Household Waste Recycling Centre



Unmanaged grassland at Thistley Hill in Dover

Other KCC Sites

Other KCC sites also joining the campaign include the grounds around KCC offices, day care centres and adult education centres.

Look out for:

- Over 3.5 acres of semi-improved chalk grassland and other habitat at Thistley Hill in Dover. Whilst grassland around the buildings and car parks is regularly mown, the remaining areas of grassland and scrub have been unmanaged for several years and are already great for pollinators.
- Other KCC offices, such as Worrall House in Kings Hill, are leaving parts of their grounds unmown. Overtime, it is hoped that some KCC staff may volunteer with pollinator monitoring activities during their lunch breaks.

Make sure to follow [our Facebook page](#) for more information on KCC's No Mow May sites. We will also be posting about how you can improve your lawn for wildflowers and pollinators throughout May.

Below are some websites for further information on No Mow May and managing your gardens and lawns for pollinators and other wildlife:

[Plantlife's No Mow May](#) [Kent Wildlife Trust Wild About Gardens](#)
[RSPB Wild Lawns for Wildlife](#) [Gardener's World – 5 tips for a wildlife-friendly lawn](#)
[Natural History Museum - How to grow a lawn that's better for wildlife](#)



Image Credit: Plantlife

Pollinators to see in May

It's May and the emergence of spring pollinators is in full swing.

Bees: Shril Carder Bumblebee (*Bombus sylvarum*), Wool carder bee (*Anthidium manicatum*), Long-horned bee (*Eucera longicornis*)

Moths: Elephant Hawk-moth (*Deilephila elpenor*), Cinnabar (*Tyria jacobaeae*), Yellow-barred Long Horn (*Nemophora degeerella*)

Butterflies: Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*)

Beetles: Common Cockchafer (*Melolontha melolontha*), Sulphur beetle (*Ctenopus sulphureus*)

Wasps: Ruby-tailed Wasp (*Chrysis ignita agg.*), Black-banded spider wasp (*Anoplius viaticus*)

Flies/ hoverflies: Batman Hoverfly (*Myathropa florea*), Broad Centurion (*Chloromyia Formosa*)

Wildflowers to spot this month include Bluebells, Buttercups, Common Vetch, Cowslips, Cow Parsley, Garlic Mustard, Ground Ivy, Oxeye Daisy, and Speedwells.

POLLINATORS TO SEE IN MAY



Shril Carder Bumblebee
Bombus sylvarum



Elephant Hawk-moth
Deilephila elpenor



Common Blue
Polyommatus icarus



Batman Hoverfly
Myathropa florea



Ruby-tailed Wasp
Chrysis ignita agg.

Others to See

Cinnabar - *Tyria jacobaeae*
Wool carder bee - *Anthidium manicatum*
Long-horned bee - *Eucera longicornis*
Clouded Yellow - *Colias croceus*
Broad Centurion - *Chloromyia formosa*

Spotted any of these? Why not share them on our Facebook page @KentsPlanBee



Spotted any of these or any other pollinators and wildflowers? Post them on our [Facebook page](#), tag us in your photos @KentsPlanBee or [email us](#) your photos.

Upcoming Events and Resources

Wild About Open Gardens

The Wild About Open Garden events are back! The next event is taking place on 14 May in Minster. Book onto this and other events through the [Kent Wildlife Trust website](#).

- Sun 14 May 1-5pm: 26 Cliff Gardens, Minster, Sheppey, ME12 3QY
- Sun 4 Jun 1-5pm: Bapchild, Sittingbourne
- Sun 11 Jun 1-5pm: 68 South Hill Road, Gravesend, DA12 1JZ
- Sat 17 Jun 1-5pm: 1 Victoria Close, Edenbridge, TN8 5BT
- Sat 24 Jun 1-5pm: Myrtle House, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green, Maidstone, ME17 2AR
- Sun 25 Jun 1-5pm: Endymion, Perry Wood, Selling, Faversham, ME813 9SF
- Sat 23 July 11am-4pm: Goodnestone Park, near Sandwich
- Sat 3 Sep 1-5pm: Lacey Down, 22 Canterbury Road, Lydden, Dover, CT15 7ER

Bumblebee Conservation Trust Free Online Identification Training

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust are hosting several free online events to improve your bumblebee identification skills. Book your free place through the Trust's [events calendar](#) on their website.

Entry-level: 12 May, Intermediate-level: 23 May

Other Pollinator Events

There are a few other pollinator events coming up. Use the links below to find out more and book your places:

- Singleton Environment Centre & Kent's Magnificent Moths – 14 May, 1030-1230, Singleton Environment Centre, Ashford – [Magnificent Moths for Beginners](#)
- White Cliffs Countryside Partnership Green Gang – 28 May, 1400-1530, Samphire Hoe – [Make a Giant Orchid](#) (Childrens event)
- White Cliffs Countryside Partnership Green Gang – 30 May, 1300-1500, Folkestone Warren – [Butterflies, Bees and other insects](#) (Childrens event)
- Friends of Kingsmead Field – 7 June, starts 1930, St Stephen's Church Hall, Canterbury CT2 7AB - 'The Plight of the Bumblebee' talk

Keep up to date with the latest news via our [Kent's Plan Bee Facebook page](#)

If you received this email indirectly and would like to subscribe to our mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Sign Up". If you wish to unsubscribe from this mailing list, please email us on the address below with the subject line "Unsubscribe".

Do you have a Kent pollinator news story or event that you would like featured in our newsletter? Have you created a pollinator friendly community space? Got your neighbours together to create a row of pollinator friendly gardens? Or do you have an event about Kent's pollinators you would like advertised? Email it to the address below and we will be in contact about a potential space in the Newsletter.

planbee@kent.gov.uk

All the previous editions of the Newsletter have now been added to our webpage. You can download them as PDFs or share the website address on your social media. Find all the Newsletters on the [Pollinators section of Kent County Council's website](#).

Edited by Hannah Simmons, Graduate Biodiversity Officer, Kent County Council.

For a Pollinator Friendly Garden of England

