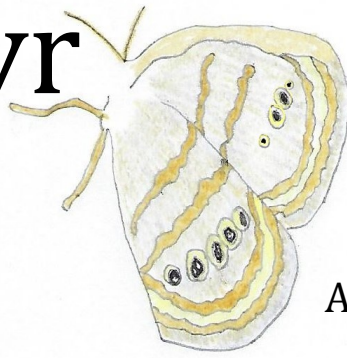


The Lonely Satyr

For Butterfly Enthusiasts of Northeast Indiana



April 1, 2023

No Mow May? By Leslie Arnold

You *may* have heard of a young initiative called “No Mow May” that is gaining ground nationally. I thought this would be great timing to explore the benefits and potential drawbacks of participating in No Mow May.

I first became aware of No Mow May last spring, when I walked by the lawn of a fellow lake resident and butterfly enthusiast. She’d placed a sign at the end of a patch of lawn, declaring No Mow May. Over the course of several weeks, I watched the patch get tall and little flowers bloom. I thought it was adorable and I was impressed by the commitment. I had no idea her small patch was tied to a growing movement.

No Mow May began in the United Kingdom in 2019. It was started by a group of community scientists as a way to help support struggling pollinators who were emerging from hibernation. The results of the study were immensely positive. They compared the increase of flowers and pollinators in No Mow lawns versus mowed lawns. In 2020, Appleton, Wisconsin jumped on the experimental survey as well and also reported positive results. And so, a community science star was born. There have been several other varying studies since. But the main idea remains to decrease your mowing frequency, and/or encourage the planting and spread of flowers.

For reference and to view multiple survey results, visit:

<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/about-us/news/no-mow-may-how-to-get-ten-times-more-bees-on-your-lockdown-lawn>

<https://beecityusa.org/reduced-mowing-studies/>

How to Participate:

- Select an area or patch of your lawn (or go whole hog). You can start small. Decide if you will mow it less frequently or not at all. If you don’t want more dandelions in your grass, you will need to time your mowing carefully. It is important to be realistic about the capabilities of your lawn care equipment and thickness of grass you can maintain. Perhaps you are unable to be a “no mow” lawn, but you could be a “low mow” lawn by just mowing less often.
- Talk with your neighbors about what will happen to your lawn.
- Make a sign for your lawn or visit Bee City USA online and print out the official sign. They even have a coloring version of the sign for kids.

To get official yard signs and resources, visit:

<https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may>



Common Blue Violet, herbarium.butler.edu

For more tips on how to participate, visit the article:

Mark Wolfe, “I Let My Lawn Grow for No Mow May-Here’s What Happened.” June 2, 2022,

<https://www.bobvila.com/articles/lawn-no-mow-may/>

No Mow May cont'd.

Potential Problems:

- Some argue that dandelions, the prominent weed in our lawns, are not the best food for pollinators. More dandelions may distract pollinators from finding better food sources.
- If the type of grass you have in your lawn gets too tall, the pollinators may have a difficult time getting to flowers.
- If you live in a city, there may be ordinances in place about lawn care. Research the laws. If you live in a neighborhood, you may have HOA rules that will keep you from being able to participate. Talk with local officials about natural lawn alternatives.
- Tall grass might attract rodents and other pests to your lawn, and ultimately, to your home or neighbor's home.
- If you like the appearance of a well manicured lawn, you may be tempted to cut your grass too short after No Mow May and create a dry lawn. For some, the abundance of "weeds" may actually lead to more herbicide use, especially by your neighbors.
- Future home owners or neighbors may end up using more fertilizer and herbicide to erase No Mow May evidence.
- Some people just really like to mow!



Alternatives:

- Plant pollinator friendly, native plants in containers and place them on your sidewalk, balcony, or patio.
- Create a natural area of your lawn in an "out of the way" spot to help keep neighbors happy.
- Plant a native tree or shrub or perennial wildflower garden.
- Place a sign in your lawn supporting pollinators.
- Donate to, or volunteer for, your favorite pollinator organization or native plant society.

The Benefits:

- Nature up close! You could see more pollinators (and other wildlife) in your lawn.
- Less watering
- Less mowing equals less fuel used
- Awareness! Your efforts may start a conversation and spark an interest in butterflies.

To my knowledge, if you do decide to be a part of No Mow May, there is no official survey taking place in Indiana or Michigan. But, this doesn't mean your efforts will be all for naught. If you're like me, and you need to put numbers somewhere, there are some phenology websites like iNaturalist, Nature's Notebook, Journey North, and Indiana Phenology you can join. Be sure to send any butterfly sightings to this newsletter. Don't feel pressured to participate in No Mow May; it isn't a good fit for everyone. Anything you do to love butterflies is a step in the right direction!

Additional online resources:

<https://nomowmay.plantlife.org.uk>

<https://xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/great-lakes>

Community Calendar

Contact the event host prior to traveling to make sure it's not cancelled.

In Person Butterfly Monitor Training

Thursday, April 27, 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Maple Wood Nature Center, LaGrange, IN

Participants will be taught how to conduct butterfly surveys and how to contribute to a national database in partnership with the Michigan Butterfly Network. Registration fee is \$5.00. RSVP deadline is April 24. Mail fee and contact information to: Blue Heron Ministries, Attn: John, 2955 W. Orland, Angola, IN, 46703. Contact John Brittenham at johnbrittenham@gmail.com with questions.

Indiana Bumble Bee Monitoring Training

Wednesday, May 3, 9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center

2152 S 425 W, Albion, IN

To register call: 217-218-4604

Free! No prior experience necessary. Must have ability to take a clear photo of bees in nature.

Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 6, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Riverview Native Nursery

5635 County Road 72, Spencerville, IN, 46788

This plant sale is part of the Rural Artists Studio Tour.

www.riverviewnativenursery.com

Virtual Butterfly Monitor Training

Michigan Butterfly Network, Kalamazoo Nature Center

Saturday, May 13, 11:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.

FREE! Learn how to identify IN/MI butterflies and monitor a butterfly route. RSVP deadline is 5/12. Register online at:

<https://naturecenter.org/michiganbutterfly/butterfly-monitor-trainings/>

Under "Choose Your Location" click on Kalamazoo



Dreamy Duskywing

Photo credit: Richard Gerber

3/25/23, SE Kentucky, Appalachia

Sightings: Red Spotted Purple, Zebra Swallowtail



Long-tailed Skipper

Photo credit: Leslie Arnold

10/24/22, Edisto Beach State Park, SC

If you'd like your event information to be in May's newsletter, please turn it in by April 22. Local sightings are my favorite part of the newsletter, so please report what you're seeing. Don't be shy!

Photos are great!



To subscribe and submit:

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