



March 31, 2022

New Paltz Town Board:

We write to you today to request that the Town of New Paltz consider participating in a campaign from the non-profit Xerces Society for invertebrate conservation called “No Mow May”. The campaign asks residents to delay mowing their lawns until June to allow early wildflowers (weeds such as dandelions, clovers, and violets) to bloom. The nectar and pollen offered by these early flowers provide critical food resources to our declining insect pollinators as they emerge from overwintering. No Mow May is particularly beneficial for our native bees, including many species of bumble bees, sweat bees, and mason bees, which are important components of our ecosystem and highly efficient pollinators of many of our region’s most important crops (apples, pumpkins, blueberries, squash, and tomatoes, to name a few). Note that our native bee species are generally not aggressive and rarely sting humans, and that a marginally taller lawn does not increase the risk of Lyme disease. More general information about No Mow May is here: <https://beecityusa.org/no-mow-may/>.

Municipalities can allow for participation in No Mow May by announcing that they will refrain from enforcing town laws penalizing residents who don’t mow their lawns for the month of May. In June, many other plants are in flower and the pollinators no longer need to rely on early blooming species, so mowing can resume. Residents who choose to participate can print signs to place on their un-mowed lawns advertising their participation: <https://xerces.org/publications/other/no-mow-may>. Perhaps the Town of New Paltz could incentivize participation by having a small number of weather-proof signs printed to hand out to the first 20 residents to sign on?

Many other municipalities are participating, as publicized in this recent NYT article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/28/travel/no-mow-may-wisconsin.html>.

Allowing and encouraging residents of New Paltz to participate in No Mow May is a win for wildlife, agriculture, and the climate. And it costs nothing. Let’s see spring flowers and buzzing bees all over our lawns this May!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kara Belinsky".

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