

## #growdontmow Webinar Questions Answered

### Dave Goulson answers your questions:

What is the alternative to flea/worm drops – is it tablet form? >> Wash pet bed regularly to kill larval stages, Hoover underneath, and don't use any pesticide unless there is a flea problem. Try "Billy No Mates" herbal diet – some swear by it. If all that fails, use Bravecto tablets.

Garden centre bee friendly plants with pesticides:

- Do the pesticides wear off over time or will it be there forever? >> They do wear off, but it might take a year or two, depending on which pesticide was used (and there is no way of knowing).
- Where can we buy good bee friendly seeds from? >> Seeds are not normally treated with insecticides, so any source is fine.
- If growing from seed isn't an option, where can we buy bedding plants from? >> Rosy Bee Nursery, or Bee Happy Plants – both online, both excellent!

With the potential of mowers that cut and collect at the same time will take away the seeds as well? and so believe raking a few days after would be the best option? does anyone know of any research into this? >> If the cut is late, in end August / September, the seeds will have already dropped.

I have mining bees in my garden lawn, at what point would it be best to scarify the lawn for wildflower seeding? >> When the adult bees aren't active

Are there any research groups to know of populations are increasing/declining in the UK to see how these initiatives are working? >> Bumblebee Conservation Trust runs a bumblebee monitoring program, Beewalks, you can join!

I recently read an article that likened urban sports grounds to our ancient grasslands, havens for certain insects and bird species. Is it sometimes preferable to have a mown patch interspersed with wild vegetation? Are lawns always so bad? Thanks! >> This sounds like nonsense to me! Close mown grass / sports grounds are generally very poor for biodiversity.

What's the best way to survey bees over a long period of time? >> A regular transect walk, see answer above

We have lots of sheep in Derbyshire, who keep the grass and plants really short. How much damage do they do to insect life? and how much damage do those plastic hay bales do? I imagine lots of insects all bound up inside >> Overgrazing is very bad for bees – sheep love to eat the flowers, so there is nothing for the bees. I think plastic bales are normally silage – usually cut early, and no doubt killing quite a few insects.

Is there a way of finding out which growers/garden centres do not use these harmful insecticides? Are there moves to ban them? People are now getting more on board to help bees and inadvertently are doing harm.... so disheartening >> Use an online organic nursery, see above, or grow from seed, or plant swap with friends. No move to ban pesticides on ornamental flowers I'm afraid.

Great talk, thanks! Last year I had a lot of bugs in my rosemary. They were beautiful/colourful, but ate the tops of lots of rosemary leaves, turning them brown. I don't use pesticide and picked the bugs out of

the bushes almost daily. Still, there were a lot of them. Any tips on how to get rid of them in another friendly way? >>These are rosemary beetles – beautiful. I just let them eat what they want ☺

Dave, do you have any top tips for improving biodiversity in the workplace? Is there anything you have found to be particularly effective if you were to choose only 1 or 2? >>If there is greenspace, then everything that applies to gardens!

Do you have any recommendations for plant/living roofing? >>Sorry, not something I've looked into.

### **Tim Birch answers your questions**

Is anybody working with National Rail about their network of tracksides?

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust is not working with them at the moment but this is a very good idea and we will get in touch with them.

I have mentioned this before but it would be great if the wildlife trusts and council could create a scheme that links with local businesses to show which ones are organic and support rewilding. It may also raise revenue for the trust as I would be happy to pay a membership for such a scheme. Its highlighting the impacts of lawn care and ground maintenance to customers and raising awareness.

This is a really interesting idea. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust works with many partners who are committed to helping conserve and restore wildlife. With our focus now on nature's recovery we want to do so much more working with more partners. Our website contains a lot of information on the projects we are working on and the partners we are working with.

Do you also think its worth changing how people view plants as weeds? Many don't appreciate what some of the plants do and how they highlight issues with the soil, clover due to a lack of nitrogen and dandelions due to a lack of calcium etc. I really don't think the public understand and many want a monoculture of one particular grass type for example.

Yes more publicity not just from the Wildlife Trusts is needed to change people's view on weeds and what constitutes a weed. We need re-education in this area as "weeds" are vital for our bees and pollinators. They are also very beautiful – a yellow roadside verge full of dazzling dandelions is just stunning and the bees love it as well!

Is there an active campaign challenging retailers who are selling these poisonous "bee friendly" plants.

No unfortunately not at the moment.

Are the DWT engaged with Golf Clubs to help them better manage their periphery areas where golf is unaffected? If so, how can a golf club get involved?

We are not engaged directly with any golf clubs at the moment. However we would be delighted to hear from any golf clubs who want to help restore and protect nature and offer advice on how they could best achieve that.

Hello, are DWT planning to work with Derby City Council to highlight the importance of wildflowers and improving biodiversity in the cities parks and green spaces? Also how can I, as a citizen, take action to engage my community in this issue and encourage people to do more for nature locally? Any suggestions welcome 😊

We are working very closely with Derby City Council on a number of exciting biodiversity projects and hope to increase our partnership working with them in the future as well.

### **Emma Mortimer answers your questions**

You mentioned this trial you have to cut by hand. Have you been looking at hiring/purchasing the equipment you need to do the longer grass if the scheme grows bigger across district or look for more communities that take these pieces of land? How have you found the costs for delivery?

The cost of purchase or hiring cut and collect machine is something that is being investigated this year. Although the help from groups in raking off the cuttings is really useful in the short term it's not something we can rely on in the long term.

Would equipment that can not only cut and collect but also separate local seed be an option?

No it wouldn't, the machines simply collect the cuttings in a box at the back of machine as it cuts.

Thank you for the presentation, can you let me know if all councils are doing this?

The press association has found out through freedom of information requests that 7 in 10 councils are making efforts to encourage wildflowers on road verges.

Emma mentioned the potential of mowers that cut and collect at the same time. I always worry that will take away the seeds as well? and so believe raking a few days after would be the best option? does anyone know of any research into this?

We will be cutting the verges in September when most of the plants will have already set seed and most would have fallen off the plant onto the ground, so there should be plenty to germinate into new plants. I don't know if there has been any research into this.

Do you have any educational material I can use with my grandchildren? A map of where these areas are?

I don't have any educational material, however Derbyshire Wildlife Trust may do as they work with schools and have children's nature groups. <https://www.derbyshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/get-wild-home>

The road verges are across the District but three are within Matlock and these would be safe to visit with your grandchildren: the entrance into Morledge housing estate on the left hand side of the island, by the top car park at The Arc leisure center and along the edge of car park between Matlock bus exchange and Sainsburys car park.

Emma @ DDDC - fabulous! Do you know if High Peak BC is aware of your project? I know Ashwood Dale Park in Buxton has a new wildflower meadow going in, but haven't heard anything about verges.

Yes HPBC is aware and I have already spoken to them about the project and they were also the webinar

What type of specialist equipment needed to cut wild flower verges? I assume a standard mower cannot cope with this?

That's right a standard mower couldn't cope with the long vegetation so we will be speaking to other local authorities about what they use and whether these machines are available for hire.

Where is a good place to buy seed from for plant species that are native to where you live? I'm in Derbyshire.

I am not aware of any but there are some seed companies that supply seeds from single species so you could look around your local area and see what's growing there and order the seeds or plants.

how do I adopt my rural verge?(as I have nurtured it to improve its plant diversity and clearly has many wild flowers now but twice it has been mown in full flower, forget me nots, cow slips, primula etc.... I am careful to ensure there is clear visibility along the road by mowing front strip)

Contact your highways local authority and there is a process to adopt a section of the highway

My question is to Emma. Emma do you link in with other councils in Derbyshire i.e Amber Valley? Is it something that DDDC or DDC have any influence over?

Derbyshire County Council is responsible for all highways in Derbyshire but they contract the work to district and borough councils. DCC is reviewing the management of the road verges for wildflowers so they can dictate to the local authorities how they are managed. I suggest you contact your local council and find out if they are doing anything for the wildflowers.

Where are the 12 areas the council have chosen for the first year of the scheme?

Hathersage, Wardlow, Bradwell, Hartington, Beeley, Matlock, Cromford , Wirksworth and Doveridge. Some have more than 1 verge in the trial.

why isn't DDDC participating in NoMowMay?

We will be next year!