



Stop Mowing

This is a simple and easy option that is all about discovering what is already growing on your site and allowing species from nearby to move in by themselves. Plants can survive in a short-mown lawn for many years without being allowed to flower, so you may end up seeing plants that have not been seen for some time or didn't even know were there as you've never seen them flower.



What do we need to do?

- Stop mowing your site from April to August each year.
- From late August through to October, mow the grass once and remove the cuttings (the cut grass) a few days later.
- By removing the cuttings you will reduce the fertility of the soil which is key to encouraging a wider variety of grassland plants to grow. Leaving it for a few days will allow any seeds and invertebrates in the cuttings to escape.
- You can mow again through the winter and early spring if you wish, but do the final mow of the spring in March.

You can build on this to create a mosaic of habitats, if you wish. This will allow for more biodiversity:

- An area mown every three years left as an uncut refuge
- An area mown once a year (August to October)
- An area mown three times a year

If you have a large area that you are leaving to grow long, consider mowing paths in curved lines or interesting patterns to provide young people with access for exploration and play, without trampling the grass.

There will be changes in what you see in the first few years of this method. After 7-10 years of this method, you will potentially start to see rarer species.

Cost

£

Season

Summer

Impact for nature

High



Connection to surrounding habitats

Grasslands can be created in the smallest spaces and can form useful corridors or stepping stones for wild species to move between natural areas, even if you only have space for a thin strip of grass. Connecting your new grassland to existing natural areas will help species to move in and use the area.



Success in an education setting

Mowing and collecting clippings is the only maintenance needed, so this is an easy option. Involve your grounds maintenance teams so they know where you are deliberately growing the grass long - the last thing you want is your area to be accidentally mown! This fits in with the Nature Park whole school approach. Adding signage can help remind them that you are letting the area grow for nature– involve learners in designing and creating this signage, or using the [Display a Nature Park Plaque](#) or [Make a Zine](#) activities.

Grasslands thrive when they are not walked on too much. Plant grasses and wildflowers adjacent to paths so they are easy to access and observe. You could put a low fence or rope around the outside of the area if you want to indicate that people should not enter a particular area.

Measure and celebrate your achievements!

Add your new area of long grass onto the Nature Park map using the [Mapping Change](#) tool. You can upload before and after photos and monitor the impact you are achieving for nature. Your new grassland will then be part of nationwide science research into nature recovery. This tool enables you to see a timeline of change on your site and to start a wildlife survey relevant to the habitat you've created.

Health and safety

If you would like to know about any potential health risks associated with garden plants, please see our [Health and Safety](#) and [Selecting Plants Guides](#). If you are in a very rural area or have natural habitats nearby that might be home to livestock or deer, there may be ticks present. If so, please read this [UK Health Security Agency article](#) for advice.



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