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PLANTS: GRASSLAND AND FLOWERS

Reduced mowing



Reduce or stop mowing in allocated areas. By leaving areas to grow long, the species that come up will help determine whether further management is required, like plug planting or sowing of Yellow-rattle, to increase floral and structural diversity.

Suitability	Low to medium density housing if sufficient areas of grassland are available. There is no fixed area we can recommend for this option, as it will depend on your site, but anything you can do will benefit wildlife and the more the better – it is good to create a mix of short and long grass if you can.
Management type	Grassland management.
Supplier information	Not applicable.
Community engagement?	Not applicable.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables existing wildflowers and grasses to grow, flower and then set seed. This will increase the overall floral diversity of the grassland, and provide more resources for a greater variety of wildlife (such as seed-feeding birds). • A mosaic of vegetation at varying heights increases the diversity of habitat structure. These different 'micro-habitats' and 'micro-climates' support a greater diversity of animals as different species require different conditions. Areas of longer vegetation provide refuge from predators and weather • Reduced management costs.
Costs/Disbenefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial cost: not applicable – cost-saving potential. • May be a perception of 'untidiness' by residents. Important to clearly communicate to residents the reasons and benefits to wildlife for leaving areas of long grass. • Possible increased risk of hayfever to residents – although there will be an increase in pollen-bearing grass flowers, these will be largely restricted to areas furthest away from buildings.
Level of ongoing maintenance	Low.



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		Notes
How achieved	Reduce or stop mowing in allocated areas. Leaving areas to grow long and see what species come up will help determine whether further management is required (e.g. plug planting, sowing of Yellow-rattle) to increase floral and structural diversity.	
Timing of activity	Mow grass mid-late July in first year. Then mow again late September-October.	
Long-term management	<p>Recommend 2-3 mows per year maximum: year 1 mow in March (spring cut), mid-late July (summer cut) and late September to October (autumn cut).</p> <p>Mow the edges of paths more regularly than the rest to help show residents that this is a deliberate activity. Try not to mow all areas at the same time. Leave a few patches of longer vegetation over winter.</p> <p>Where possible, leave the cuttings in place for 1-3 days to give any sheltering wildlife a chance to move away. Don't leave the cuttings for longer than this time as this can increase soil fertility and reduce the diversity of plants that can grow. Where possible cuttings could be moved elsewhere on site, as they can provide food and shelter for other wildlife. Some plant materials such as hollow plant stems can be used in bug hotels and bee nests.</p>	
Monitoring success	<p>General recording (see page 6).</p> <p>A butterfly transect or timed count could be set up as part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme http://www.ukbms.org. Simple butterfly timed counts can be conducted using the European Butterfly Monitoring app https://butterfly-monitoring.net/ebms-app. Flower-Insect Timed (FIT) counts can be conducted as part of the National Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) https://www.ceh.ac.uk/pollinator-monitoring.</p> <p>Conduct Plantlife's 'Every Flower Counts' survey of lawns to survey the number of flowers present and contribute to calculating a National Nectar Score: http://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts.</p>	