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1st May 24

May Day



May Day corresponds with the traditional Irish festival of Lá Bealtaine, possibly dating back to pre-Roman times. In Celtic mythology Bealtaine was the most important celebration of the year after Samhain (Halloween). The Celtic calendar had only two seasons. May 1st was the first day of summer, the ‘season of brightness’ that would run until Samhain (November 1st), the first day of the ‘season of darkness’.

May was traditionally a time to study the weather and forecast what was expected to follow:.

‘A wet May and a dry June makes the farmer whistle a tune.’

‘A swarm of bees in May is worth a load of hay.’

‘A wet and windy May fills the barns with corn and hay.’

Predicting the weather in the era of climate change is a more challenging process, even for burgeoning AI weather models. AI systems rely on historical weather data to teach them how to produce accurate forecasts. But certain kinds of weather events, such as heat waves and hurricanes, are growing more intense as the planet warms — and in some cases, they’re becoming so extreme that there are few examples at all in the historical record. That could make it difficult for AI weather models to accurately simulate unprecedented, record-breaking events.

In the face of such uncertainty, we need to act practically as well as turn to God in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we ask you to stir our hearts into action. As global temperatures increase, inspire us with ways we can make a difference in our homes, church congregations, communities, and the world around us. We pray for your prompting where we can do more to love our neighbour. Amen.

Prayer shared by Compassion in Jesus’ Name, an international children’s charity,

8th May 24

Celebrating with Environmental Awareness

We are all looking forward to fun and fellowship at the Circuit Event on Sunday, and to supporting Christian Aid. As we do so, we will be keeping in mind the small actions that ensure we do no environmental damage as celebrate. Global issues can seem overwhelming but we can play our small part in addressing challenges such as reducing emissions from waste incineration, avoiding food waste and eliminating plastic pollution. We will aim to:

- Use crockery and metal cutlery rather than plastic for adults
- Provide washable, reusable plastic plates for children, along with compostable cutlery, and compostable cups
- Put food soiled cardboard and napkins in food waste bins for composting (extra compost bins will be provided)
- Take home any food left over (if there is any!) – containers will be provided
- Ensure that what goes in the recycling bins is suitable for recycling (*dry paper/cardboard, washed, clean and shaken dry: cans and tins, tetra-pak cartons, plastics*)

Have a great day!



15th May 24

Put away your lawnmower for No Mow May!



The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is inviting gardeners and faith communities across Ireland to help wildflowers grow and feed hungry pollinators by mowing the lawn just once a month for No Mow May, Let it Bloom June, and Help them Fly July.

Every year, more people ‘join the buzz to save the bees’ by putting away their lawnmower for the month of May and letting wildflowers grow. The result has been gardens and communities full of native wildflowers including orchids, and a feast for our hungry pollinators. But it’s not just about May. Reducing mowing to just once a month can help keep pollinators fed across the summer. So why not take part in Let it Bloom June, and Help them Fly July?

On the island of Ireland, one third of our wild bees are threatened with extinction. This is mainly because of hunger – there isn’t enough food to support them in our landscape. If all of us chose to put our lawnmowers away for one month, we could start creating a network of places where pollinators can survive and thrive.

Kate Chandler, Communities and Engagement Officer for the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan says: “Mowing less is one of the best ways to help pollinators. When you reduce mowing, and remove grass clippings when you do mow, soil fertility goes down, and wildflowers that can’t handle nutrient-rich lawns have a chance to grow. You’ll be amazed by what’s in the soil waiting to appear. We’re in the middle of a biodiversity crisis. Across the island of Ireland, one third of our pollinators are in decline. But local populations are increasing where actions are being taken to help them. That proves we can make a real difference if enough of us take the right actions.”

“We often get asked ‘what happens if my grass grows too long’. It would be unusual for too much grass to grow after four weeks, unless your lawn is very fertile. But if you’re worried, raise the blades on your lawnmower and do a cut – that way you save the flowers underneath. Or just choose a small part of your lawn or a strip to do No Mow May. Every space helps, no matter how small.”

Participants in No Mow May can expect to see common wildflowers like Dandelions, Clovers and Self-heal, which in turn could attract insects like the Grey Mining Bee and Peacock Butterfly, and birds like Goldfinches.

No Mow May is an annual campaign started by Plantlife in the UK, asking everyone to put away the lawnmower during the month of May to help our native wildlife. Native Irish wildflowers like dandelions, clover, and birds-foot trefoil provide the best source of pollen and nectar for our hungry wild pollinators. By mowing less, we can give them a chance to appear naturally – no seeds needed!

More information – <https://pollinators.ie/no-mow-may>

(Shared by Eco Congregation Ireland (ecocongregationireland.com). See also Jon and Jan Corrie's article on page 38 of The Methodist Newsletter, May 2024. Then relax and enjoy not cutting the grass!

22nd May 24

Rewilding your Garden

Following on from last week's notes on No Mow May, here are some more ambitious tips for rewilding your garden from ReWild Wicklow. Just something to think about!



Untidy is good: Neatly mowed lawns, or worse still, Astroturf are wildlife wastelands with little or no

biodiversity. Before you trim, cut or remove, wait and watch. Let nature take its course and fill your garden with native species.

Save the "weeds" man: Not all weeds need to go. Once you embrace rewilding, your garden should find a natural balance between all the different plants. With a little research you'll find out the many uses of so-called 'weeds'. Nettle soup anybody? Ok maybe too far, but insects love weeds, with certain insects only using particular plants for food or laying eggs.

Change your lawn to a wildflower meadow: A meadow brimming with native wildflowers and buzzing with bees beats a boring well cut lawn any day. You can still mow out walkways and playing areas or if tight for space use the borders of your garden for wildflowers.



Leave some areas untouched: You don't need to give over all your garden, even a small percentage of your garden could be used to the benefit of wildlife or left to let nature take its course. It may seem small but if all gardens did the same it would add up to one impressive nature park.

Plant animal-friendly trees and plants: If you plant the right trees you can feed the birds all year round without ever buying a packet of bird feed. Every plant can be a potential food source, especially native species. Up to 750 species live on our native oak tree for example! In winter, by letting the ivy grow and go to berry, you are laying on a well needed banquet for birds surviving winter's cold.

More tips on rewilding to follow next week....

29th May 24

Rewilding your Garden

Following on from last week, Part 2 of the tips from ReWild Wicklow.

Piles of leaves/logs/rocks: These all provide unique habitats for different flora and fauna. Fungi love rotting wood, along with a whole host of specialist beetles too.



Wildlife highways: Leave gaps in fences or garden boundaries for small mammals like hedgehogs to get through and explore your new wildlife haven.

Build a pond: A pond provides a unique habitat for frogs, toads, newts and countless insects. It's also great for birds to grab a drink or quick wash. In summertime you'll be treated to the majesty of dancing dragonflies and damselflies.

Be patient and curious: It takes a while for your garden to transform into a biodiversity sanctuary and for wildlife to find it. But build it and they will come! Before you remove what you might think is a weed, be curious and research if it's good for pollinators or other insects.



Record species: A great way to engage both yourself and the rest of the family is to keep a record of what species visit or live in your garden. You can keep an overall score that goes up over time and get a real kick out of adding a new species to your list as they appear. To help you identify species you can use identifier apps on your phone or buy one of the many great Irish animal and plant guides.

Organic, compost and no dig: Don't use any sort of pesticides/herbicides/fungicides as these kill insects and important pollinators like bees. On top of this they can be detrimental to your own health. Fungi provide an underground network between plants and form relationships that help them absorb nutrients. Find a space to compost your garden waste. This will close the loop on your garden ecosystem and saves on bags of compost. Win win!

Spend less: By interfering less with your garden over the years you will save money. By not buying any chemical sprays you create a perpetual system that doesn't require new plants to replace plants that can't reseed or survive the winter. Minimising intervention means less time spent working and more time enjoying it. Share plants with friends, go to plant swaps and find local seed.