

Living Verges – Monthly Planner

March & April - Time to cut!	May - #NoMowMay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to your neighbours and those responsible for cutting verges about your aim to manage for nature and agree a plan. • If you haven't done it already, do your post-winter cut now. • After cutting: sweep up and remove as much of the cuttings and debris as possible – this helps to prevent the build up of thatch which increases soil nitrogen levels and can encourage docks, nettles and thistles to dominate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not cut the verges! Save yourself work and let nature start to regenerate... • You can individually cut down nettles or docks to try and weaken them. • Leaflet neighbours, rope off areas or put up signs to reassure that verges aren't being neglected – they are being managed for nature. Signs can be downloaded at: friendsofthedales.org.uk/campaigns/verges • Don't worry if you think there are too many dandelions! They are bright and cheerful and an excellent source of nectar for insects. • If you need to cut for visibility at junctions or to appease neighbours – just cut a narrow 50cm swathe at the front to provide a neat and tidy edge but which also allows the majority to remain as a haven for nature.
June - #LetitBloomJune	July - #KneeHighJuly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By now you should be starting to see all sorts of wildflowers, including buttercups, speedwell, daisies, pignut, milkmaids... • Test your identification skills or teach others with a free online plant identifier app such as <i>inaturalist</i>. • You can continue to cut back nettles, docks and thistles to make room for less thuggish species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You should be seeing the fruits of your patience and efforts now! • Insects will be hiding in the longer vegetation and finding food there, birds might be feasting on the insects or eating the plants' seeds directly – but all will be appreciating your efforts! • Why not send photos of your successes to victoria.benn@friendsofthedales.org.uk
August	September – Time to Cut!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From late August onwards, once the flowering plants have set seed you can cut the verges – remember it is good to remove cuttings and debris to keep the nitrogen levels low, which will help to encourage even more biodiversity next year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If native grasses have dominated this year, plant Yellow Rattle, it is excellent at controlling the growth of grass (plant it now so the frost will help the seeds to germinate for next year). • Why not work out how much money, time and carbon footprint your community has saved by not cutting the verges? • Use a 'quadrat' (homemade will do!) to audit the number and range of species – this is a great way of celebrating and communicating your success and monitoring the effectiveness of nature positive verge management year on year.

