

It's not always easy or cheap to be green



Richard Mahoney

MY VIEW

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On the surface, the suggestion is very tantalizing: We can help save Earth by doing nothing about our lawns for an entire month. No Mow May has returned, enabling folks to sit back and let nature take its course, without fear of running afoul of property standards by-laws.

If you love this planet, you will keep that mower tucked away until June 1. Go green, let the grass grow under your feet.

Each year, No Mow May is officially recognized by local governments which make proclamations that they will not levy fines for tall grass during that specific period.

Cornwall has waived a section of its Yard Maintenance By-Law between now and the end of the month.

"By allowing grasses and so-called weeds to grow in spring, you are assisting local pollinators, and helping to increase biodiversity," said Sustainability Project Coordinator, Angela Parker. "Biodiversity protects us against climate change; it ensures food security; it helps fight disease; and it even generates economic benefits. There is nothing wrong with adopting a do-less mentality for your lawn. Every little bit helps."

In promoting the environmental effort, the city notes that a manicured lawn "is a desert for pollinators and most wildlife. A small pile of twigs makes a great home for pollinators. Leaving a patch of ground dry, unmulched and uncultivated is beneficial for the native bees that nest underground. All bees need a source of water with a perch. Offering a muddy spot with stones helps them out!"

By delaying the use of your mower you are saving money on fuel and reducing your environmental footprint.

But, like everything else, a month-long moratorium on mowing has its doubters.

In the minds of some, the whole idea is counterintuitive. People take pride in maintaining perfect expanses of verdant vegetation. A lot of time, money, fuel and chemicals are invested in lawn maintenance. Mowers begin rolling out way before May arrives and continue to groom grass until the first frost covers the sod. To many, the smell of freshly cut grass is as soothing as the aroma of freshly baked bread. Grass fragrance home fresheners are available so you can evoke the scent of summer all year long.

No Mow naysayers point to the soaring populations of wood ticks that are bound to get even more abundant if grass is not trimmed for an entire month. Tall grass is great for bees and butterflies, but it also provides ideal habitat for ticks. But you can park the mower and still fend off those tiny menaces if you take some basic precautions, such as covering yourself from head to toe, in white, so the little creatures are easier to spot.

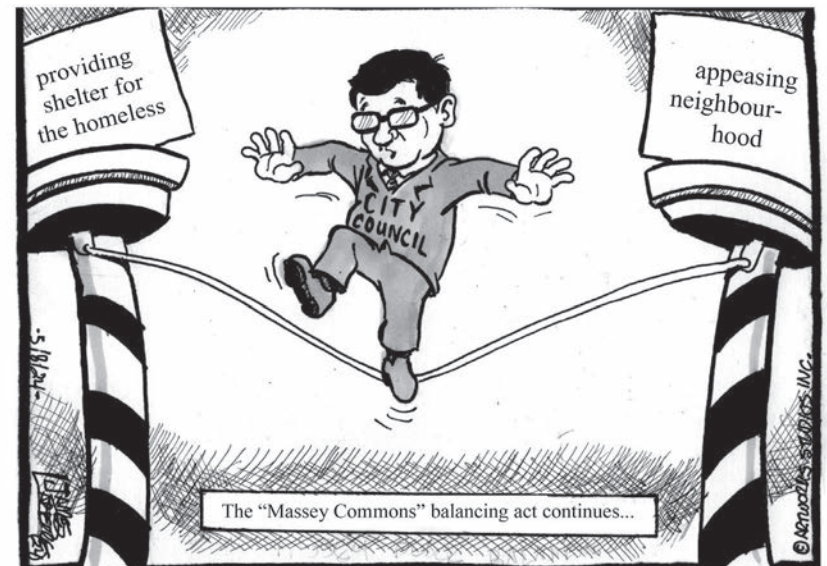
On many levels, greening runs up against several obstacles.

Take the controversy over plastic straws. Paper straws are environmentally sustainable; plastics are a scourge. Yet there has been pushback against the designation of plastic as a toxic substance, and paper straws are knocked for being too flimsy.

And then there are the billions (yes with a big B) of taxpayer dollars being invested in electric vehicles and EV batteries. Governments say this is a long game, that the money spent today will pay off in huge environmental dividends in the years to come.

Meanwhile, the average person can barely afford an EV and "range anxiety" is a legitimate worry for people who live outside major urban areas.

Think globally, act locally. We recycle, use reusable containers and wooden utensils. Every step towards reducing our environmental footprint counts. But nobody said that saving the planet was going to be easy or cheap.



Letters to the Editor—editorial@seawaynews.media

A Mother's Day wish

The Editor,

"So sweet from head to toe, that little boy of mine." This is from a song an elderly lady sang to me, when I did home care. I recorded her singing it. This touched my soul so profoundly.

Early this morning I heard a young boy yelling, "Hold my hand." Yes, it was only a dream, but it got me out of bed, and onto my computer.

I wanted to write about this for a while now. While waiting for my grand-son's swimming lesson, I noticed a beautiful little boy trying to get his mother's attention. She was too busy on her cell phone to connect with him. It was so sad,

because I was thinking what if he died the next day. Would this mother miss the contact they could have had?

When I see parents and their small children walking down the street, and parents holding their phone instead of their children's hand it really bothers me. Holding a child's hand instills security. It shows that you are there to protect them and will make sure they are safe.

Is society creating robots without any worry of the emotional impact technology is having on children?

Lorraine Lapointe, Cornwall

No Mow May—Good Intentions, bad idea

The Editor,

No Mow May is a bad idea for Canadian lawns, according to the University of Guelph and the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

Most weeds such as dandelions supply insufficient nutrition to the pollinators. Trees in the apple, willow and rose family produce more nutritious pollen than weeds found in lawns. Another problem is that the insects can become reliant on that one location to find food and then, all a sudden it's gone.

Allowing lawns to grow excessively creates temporary habitat. This isn't helpful to

pollinators when the grass is eventually mowed.

No Mow May can harm your lawn. It encourages undesirable weed species like thistles, knotweed and wild violet which can be challenging to remove. Also, cutting too much grass length at once, leaves it vulnerable to insects, weeds and disease.

So, please mow your lawns. You can create wildflower zones in your garden to benefit insects year round. A more thoughtful approach is needed to benefit pollinators. Do some research. The University of Guelph is a good source.

Betty Eadie, Cornwall

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