

STRUPPI'S WORLD

Colorful Meadow



„Ich bin der Wachhund!“

Struppi boasts proudly, his alert senses tuned to the max. “Hang in there, Struppi, just a few more days!”

It all began back in March. Struppi catches sight of something new – a sign peeking out its message from behind a patch of tall grass: „Bunte Wiese“. We continue reading: “Mow only 2x per year, Native plants protected, Nest help for insects and birds, Wood and leaf debris for hedgehogs.” Signed: <http://www.greening-the-university.de/index.php/bunte-wiese>

“What a great idea—simple and environmentally friendly, too!” A quick google search takes us to the web-site where the same sign is available to print. Enclosing this in a plastic cover, nailing it to a peg which we pound into the middle of our garden and Voila! Our own “colorful meadow”!

Surprisingly, not everyone agreed with this great idea – a fact made clear when our sign was knocked down a few days later. I repaired it the next day, and since then, there’s been no repeat of vandalism. Not since Struppi appointed himself as Meadow Guard Dog, a new job he takes very seriously, even forgoing long naps so as not to miss anything. His efforts are well rewarded with new sites and sounds:

insects – too numerous and quick to count – several species of native wild bees, including the fuzzy bumble bees Struppi tries in vain to stop their buzzing, moths and butterflies – all the invertebrate that need a variety of pollen and nectar. Variety that now wildflowers provide—the tall sunny *Ranunculus acris* = buttercups, (poisonous to livestock fresh, but edible as hay), towering over purple and white clover, nutritious for us, and for the soil (add nitrogen), plus you’d be hard pressed to find one clover blossom without a hungry insect nearby.

More insects bring more birds – song birds, amels, finches, and blue-tits, who now have a gourmet selection of meals...a wildlife cafeteria opened 24-hours per/day!

„Mensa!“ Struppi shouts, hunting menu items more to his tastes: a mouse and perhaps even a visiting marten or fox.

Text and photo: Susan Holliday