



Untidy Your Yard: 5 Ways You Can Help Pollinators This Winter

Once summer's warm temperatures fade away and the leaves change colors, pollinators of all kinds begin to travel south for the winter.

Even though you may not notice any obvious signs of life in your garden, there are still many non-migrating pollinators wandering about! Several native bees, caterpillars, butterflies and birds seek safe places to overwinter in Wisconsin (or in your yard).

Protect Pollinators and Wait Until Spring for Garden Cleanup

Rather than tidying up your plants and natural debris when in autumn, leave your yard or garden spaces "untidy" to help support non-migrating pollinators, insects and animals during our brutal Midwest winter.

Here are five ways you can easily "untidy" this fall:



Leave small dead trees standing or a few dead branches or stumps in your yard. Spiders and caterpillars will hibernate in them.



Leave some of your perennials standing into late fall. Insects may use the leaves, flowers or stems as materials to create a cocoon or hibernation site.



Don't deadhead all of your flowers. Leave some seed heads from flowers like aster and goldenrod to dry during the fall and winter. Late season bees will feast on the pollen and the plants may self-sow and pop up in spring!



Create small piles of cut plants or fall leaves. Many butterfly and moth species like to hunker down in leaf piles. Solitary bees and queen bumblebees will burrow in the ground under leaf litter.



Incorporate evergreen trees or shrubs to provide windbreaks and add areas of extra protection for overwintering pollinators. You can also find gaps in your flowerbeds to see what sorts of pollinator plants you can plant in spring and early summer next year.

For more information on protecting pollinators, visit our website at GBBG.org.