



SPRING CLEAN UP

If you clean up all your leaves and plant debris too soon, you could be throwing away this year's butterflies and bees!

Just like in the fall, it's best to leave the leaves and plant matter in the spring. Bees use empty stalks and plant debris as nesting material all year round. If this notion is a bit too much for you, designate certain garden beds to keep a bit more tidier for a more structured design look and let others go wild for the pollinators!

1. CUT AND PILE

Many insects are still in a hibernation state in early spring. It's best to wait until temperatures are consistently warm, (late April or May in Michigan) to begin garden work. Simply cut back old flower stalks to provide new nesting opportunities for bees and leave the rest alone. If that's not enough clean up for you, bundle yard debris and put it in a loose pile off to the side to give all those critters some time to wake up.

2. HOLD OFF ON MULCHING

Beneficial insects (like hummingbird clearwing moths and native bees) overwinter in soil burrows. Covering the ground too early with mulch can prevent them from emerging from hibernation. Alternatively, forget the mulch! Save yourself some time, work, and money by keeping fall leaf litter in your garden beds as a weed barrier all year long.

3. TRIM WITH CARE

There may be some chrysalides (swallowtails, sulfurs, and spring azures) hanging around on branches! If you need to prune, toss the debris in a loose pile off to the side.



4. MAKE PLANS

Occupy any extra time by planning your spring garden spaces. Be sure to include plenty of native plants!

