



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, November 5, 2023

Protect Pollinators as They Hunker Down for the Winter

“California recently became the 10th U.S. state to adopt legislation restricting bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides.... A decade ago, there wasn't a single state in the union that had restricted the use of bee-killing pesticides. Today, one in four Americans lives in a state that has taken action to restrict these bee-killing pesticides. And not a moment too soon, as bee-killing pesticides are among the key drivers of the global bee die-off and pushing bumblebee species toward extinction.” (*Environment America*, 10/22/23)

“Want to help protect pollinators as you prepare your lawn or garden for winter? Use these tips to help bees survive until spring:

1. Leave the leaves

Leave fallen leaves where they lie, or keep raked leaves in your yard. A carpet of autumn leaves provides great shelter for bumblebees and other overwintering pollinators.

2. Don't clear dead stems

Don't "put your garden to bed" by clearing brush. Allowing twigs, leaf litter and brush to remain creates an abundance of winter pollinator homes, with almost no effort on your part.

3. Plant winter-blooming flowers

Many insects sleep all winter, but some emerge to feed during mild weather. Clusters of winter-blooming plants will provide bees some much-needed nourishment.

4. Leave bare soil alone

Many wild bees, including bumblebees, spend the winter in small nests in the ground. This habitat helps them stay warm and safe.

5. Avoid using pesticides

This is important year-round, but especially in winter when bees are at their most vulnerable. Certain pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, have been implicated in large scale bee die-offs. Keeping your garden pesticide-free will make it a healthy habitat for pollinators of all kinds.

Taking even one of these steps will make a big difference for pollinators in your backyard.... When spring comes again in just a few short months, buzzing bees and colorful butterflies will emerge again to thank you for keeping them safe during the coldest time of year.” (The *Environmental Action Team*, 10/29/23)