



Duff and Log Habitat



By leaving the natural leaf debris in the garden we are providing habitat, insulation, and protection for many pollinator and valuable insect species. Allowing leaves and woody materials to decompose also helps to recycle important nutrients back into the soil and retain soil temperature and moisture.

Many species over-winter within or underneath the leaf litter. You never know what beneficial insects may be living there. Many species of moth and butterfly lay their eggs on the underside of fallen leaves or disguise their cocoons and chrysalis as dried leaves. Bumble bees only burrow a couple of inches underground for the winter and the leaf litter adds a layer of protection.

The majority of native bees are solitary and build nests in open sandy soil, spent plant stems, or old woody materials. Many wasps and ants also reside in the natural woody structures of downed logs or tree stags. Logs also provide short-term habitat during the winter for butterfly and moth larvae. Old plant stalks are left intact within the garden during the fall to winter months to provide habitat structure and nesting sites within the hollow space or pith at the center of the stems.

In addition to pollinator species, the duff layer also provides foraging habitat for birds, small mammals, and other insects.

