

## GREEN Growing: Everyone Needs A Home



There's a nip in the air, Halloween is right around the corner, and autumn chores are in full swing. Before you tidy up too much, consider being a "*host with the most*" to wildlife during the winter. You'll get hours of enjoyment watching the birds and mammals reward you with their beauty and antics.

**Create a brush pile:** Autumn winds and storms often leave branches behind. Before putting them at the curb, consider making a neat brush pile on your property. Brush piles protect many mammals, birds, insects, and pollinators during the winter.

**Use your leaves:** Rather than discard your leaves, use them to mulch your gardens, trees, and bushes. It's what nature intended and will prevent frost upheaval and damage. Leaves provide shelter to salamanders, toads, overwintering pollinators, and beneficial insects. Using leaves is also economical – they provide free mulch and fertilizer. To learn more about mulching with leaves, click [here](#).

**Pile some rocks:** Many animals and insects overwinter under and between rocks. If you have some rocks, pile them up to provide shelter during the winter.

**Leave the flower stalks:** Native plants, such as Coneflowers, Sunflowers, and Black-eyed Susans, produce seed heads that are essential for feeding birds and small mammals during the winter. The flower stalks are also home to overwintering insects and pollinators. Enjoy watching the birds feed on your flower seeds all winter long. During mid-spring, cut down the stalks as you tidy up the gardens for the growing season.

**Provide the 3 essentials:** Birds and mammals need three things to survive the winter: Food, shelter, and fresh water. Consider supplementing natural food sources with seed or suet feeders. Roosting or nesting houses can provide additional shelter. Offer fresh water for drinking and bathing through a heated bird bath. Click [here](#) for some fun family projects to create food for birds.

*The foregoing is provided as a public service announcement and without promotion, representation, or review by the Village of Ardsley.*