

# Welcoming Wildlife: Providing Cover for Wildlife



  
**Garden for Wildlife**<sup>™</sup>  
by National Wildlife Federation

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



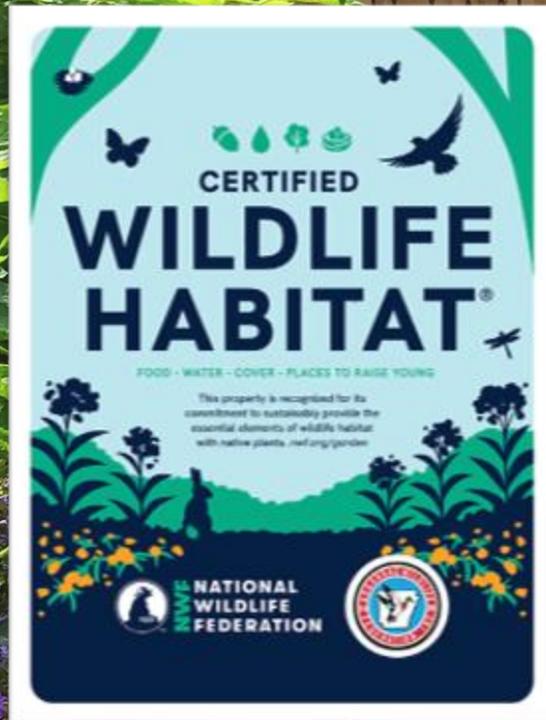
# Sim Barrow

*Director of Community Conservation*

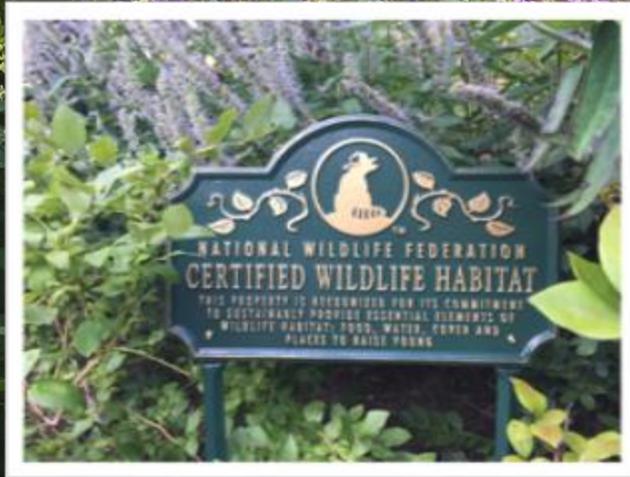
Arkansas Wildlife Federation



"Hey there – Sim here to say that these slides were originally presented to a live audience, but we wanted to make them available as an online resource. I've added comments to each slide as needed to make them more accessible for viewing online."



"This presentation is part of a four-part series about how to participate in National Wildlife Federation's Certified Wildlife Habitat Program, which provides a framework for creating a wildlife-friendly landscaping in residential and community spaces."



**CERTIFIED WILDLIFE  
HABITAT®**

[NWF.ORG/GARDEN](http://NWF.ORG/GARDEN)



“All of these places are eligible for Wildlife Habitat Certification! Not only does certification benefit wildlife, but it also raises awareness about wildlife-friendly landscaping while improving quality of life for yourself and your neighbors.”

- Home
- Workplace
- Farm
- School
- University
- Apartment Rooftop
- Park
- Place of Worship



“Whether you’re just starting out or have been on your wildlife habitat journey for a while, these are a few helpful reminders to avoid feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. Expect incremental progress and don’t expect perfection!”

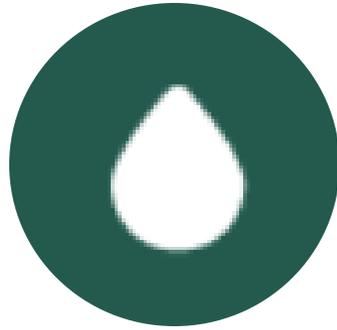
## Keep in mind:

- **It’s a journey, not a destination!**
- **It isn’t all-or-nothing**
- **Progress over perfection**

# All wildlife need four things to survive



Food



Water



Cover



Places to Raise  
Young



“This presentation is focused on ways to provide cover, which is an essential habitat element for wildlife.”

# What is Cover for Wildlife?



# Cover for Wildlife

What is wildlife cover?

- Refuge from inclement weather
- Safe place to rest
- Escape from danger





“If your goal is to provide cover for the widest diversity of wildlife, then you’ll need to provide multiple kinds of cover at varying locations in your yard, each suiting the needs of specific types of animals. For instance, some songbirds benefit from dense shrubs while toads need cover on the ground.”

# Key Considerations

Providing cover for wildlife

- Close to other habitat resources
- Focus on biodiversity
- Diversity of cover types:
  - Density
  - Height
  - Shade & humidity
  - Size





“Dense plantings serve as escape cover from predators and household pets.”



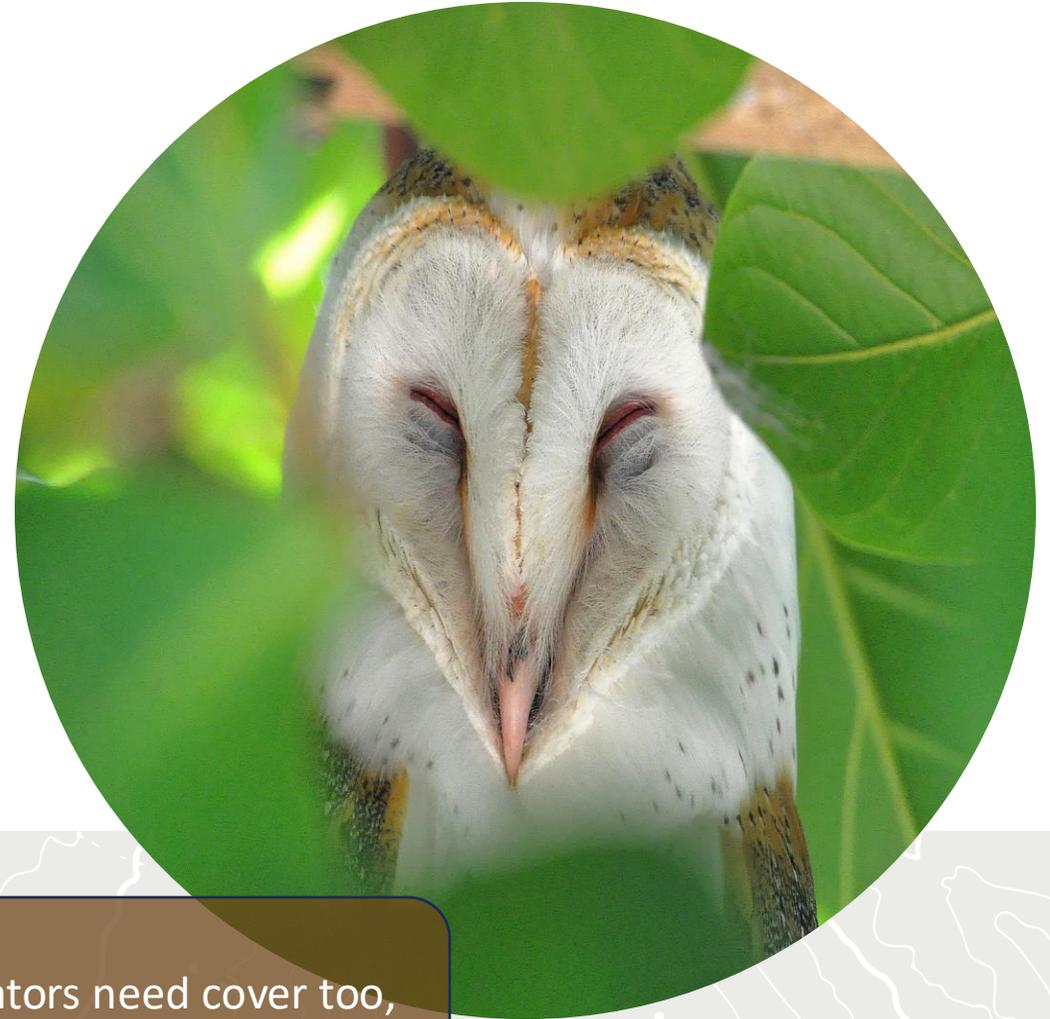
# Cover for Wildlife

Plant densely to provide cover in the garden

  
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# Prey and Predator Need Cover



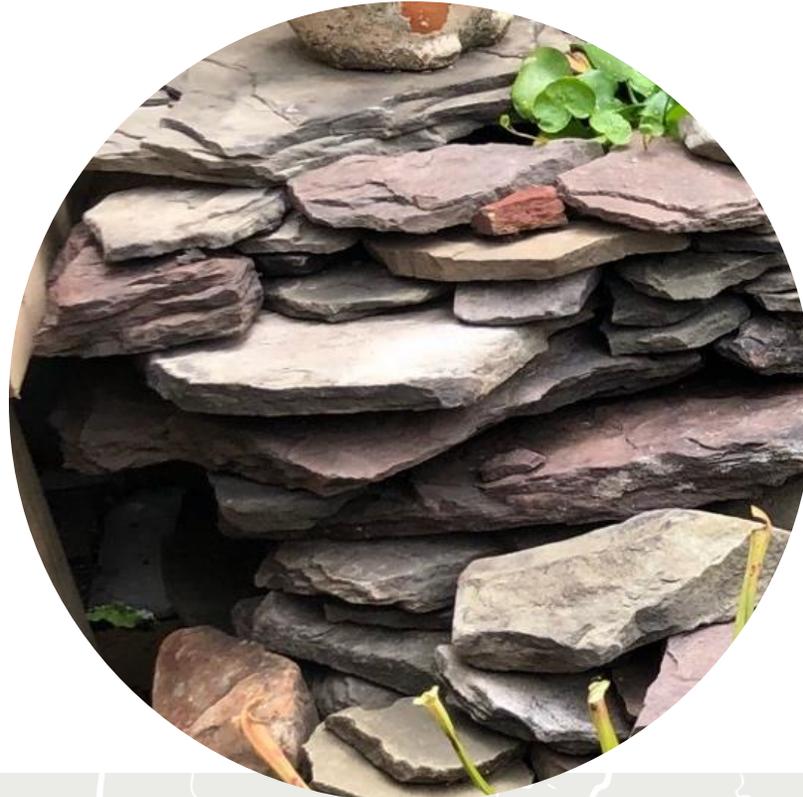
“Of course, natural predators need cover too, which we can also provide in our yards.”

# Natural Sources of Cover



“Natural cover like brush piles, fallen logs and tree cavities provide excellent structure for wildlife and may already be present in your yard.”

# Artificial Sources of Cover



“Alternatively, you can add cover by installing bee hotels, stacking rocks, or purchasing a “toad abode” to serve as functional décor in your landscaping.”

“Keep in mind that cover needs vary by season as wildlife movement patterns and weather conditions change.”

## Seasonal Needs

- Fall/Winter vs. Spring/Summer
- Supporting natural movement cycles (migration & breeding habits)



# Leave the Leaves

“Perhaps the most overlooked form of wildlife cover is the layer of fallen leaves that blankets the ground each fall. Each year an increasing number of wildlife enthusiasts choose to “Leave the Leaves where they can to help wildlife prepare for winter.”



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The natural leaf layer serves many important roles in the ecosystem



# Leaf Layer Benefits



**Cycles  
Nutrients**



**Preserves  
Moisture**



**Fertilizes  
the Soil**



**Provides  
Cover**



## Leaf Layer Benefits:

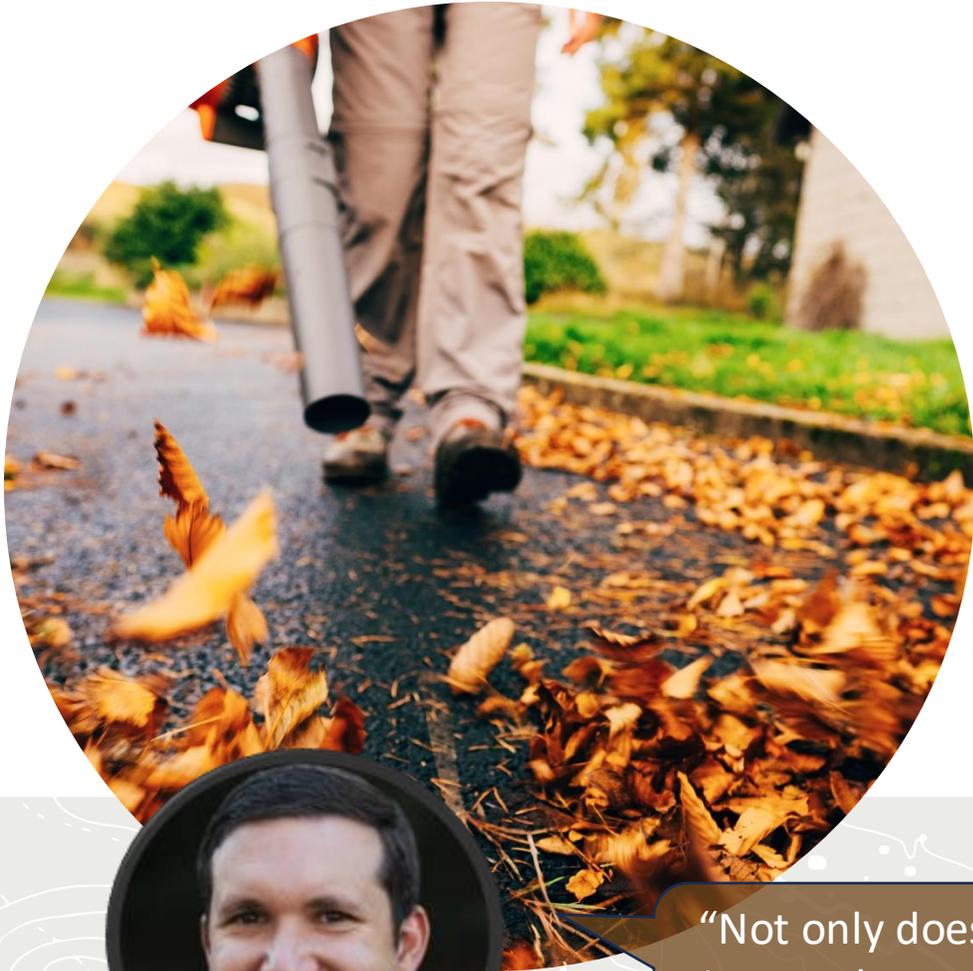
Fallen leaves provide critical overwintering habitat for a wide variety of insects.

“Some of our most impressive and beautiful moths like this polyphemus moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*) and the luna moth (*Actius luna*) spend the winter as cocoons in the leaf layer. Also, fireflies spend most of their lives as larvae prowling the leaves for prey.”



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# Save time, energy and money!



“Not only does it help wildlife to leave the leaves, but it may also save you a significant amount of time and effort that would otherwise be spent removing them.”

# Tips & Tricks



“If you want to keep a tidy, leaf-free yard, you can do so by moving the leaves to somewhere that’s out of the way, or by using them as natural mulch around the base of your trees. This preserves the

  
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# Save the Stems

“While many gardeners deadhead their flowers, leaving the seedheads and stems also serves as cover for native bees, which spend the winter in the hollow stems.”

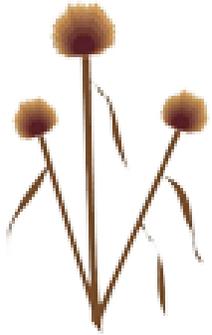


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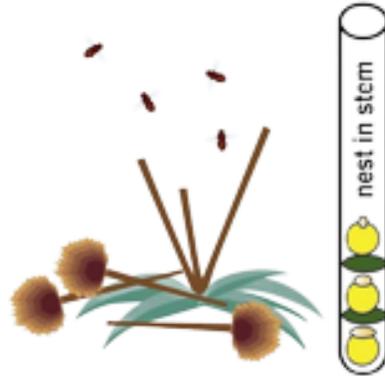
# How to Create Habitat for Stem-nesting Bees

## Winter



Leave dead flower stalks in-tact over the winter.

## Spring



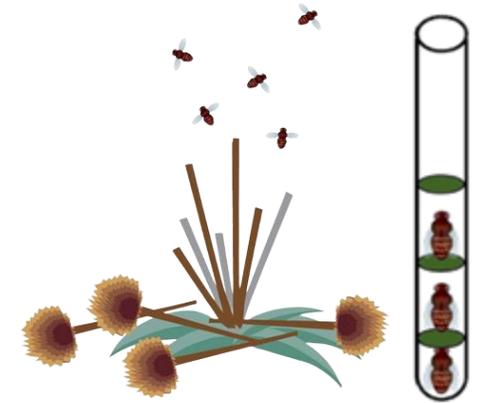
Cut back dead flower stalks, leaving 8-24 inches. Eggs are laid on pollen balls.

## Summer



Larvae develop in the cut stems during the growing season, and hibernate until next Spring.

## Next Spring



Cut back dead stalks. Adult bees emerge to create nests in newly-cut dead stems.

Graphic: Colleen Satyshur, Elaine Evans, Heather Holm, Sarah Foltz-Jordan



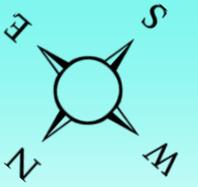
# Planning for Cover



“In this hypothetical backyard habitat, we can see many kinds of cover – leaf piles, dense vegetation, rocks and logs, etc. We can also understand how sun exposure influences the suitability of various forms of cover.”



# Planning for Cover: Morning



“In the morning, cool temperatures and high humidity result in ample cool & moist cover. Early sun exposure warms bird boxes and bee hotels.”

# Planning for Cover: Midday



“By midday, the sun is high and shadows are short. Warm & dry cover is plentiful, but some wildlife like frogs and salamanders will need to seek refuge under rocks and logs to stay cool and moist.”

# Planning for Cover: Evening



“In the evening, temperatures start to drop and humidity begins to increase. Reptiles seek the warmth of rocks and nocturnal insects emerge from their warm moist shelter.”





# Wild About Nature? Get Your Yard **CERTIFIED**



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“Feel free to reach out with any questions about wildlife habitat and be sure to visit [www.nwf.org/certify](http://www.nwf.org/certify) to complete your habitat certification!”

**Thank you!  
Questions?**