Winterize Your Yard for Wildlife

Have you ever wondered how animals survive during the cold winter months? Here are some tips for helping wildlife survive winter in your backyard!

1. **BRUSH PILES** — Create shelters by putting larger branches on the bottom and layer smaller branches on top. This provides roosting places and protection from predators and storms for birds and other small animals.

2. **EVERGREEN LANDSCAPING** — This provides shelter and a natural food source for wildlife. Landscaping should include native trees, shrubs, and dense groundcovers to provide shelter at a variety of heights.

3. **BIRD HOUSES** — These can provide secure shelter for different types of small birds or mammals. Bird houses and roost boxes can be purchased or made DIY-style.

4. **BEE HOTELS** — Bee hotels are a great way to attract pollinators to your garden. Bees will lay eggs in the tunnels of bee hotels, where the eggs will continue to develop over the winter.

5. **FEEDERS** — There are many types of feeders that can attract different types of birds. It is important to regularly clean them, to prevent the spread of infection or disease.

6. **HEATED WATER SOURCE** — Offering liquid water to drink can help wildlife like birds survive during harsh winter weather, when natural water sources are likely to freeze.

7. **NATIVE PLANTS** — Using native plants in your landscaping and gardening provides natural food sources for wildlife. Many native plants have nutritious nuts, seeds, or berries that are beneficial for wildlife.

8. **LEAVE THE LEAVES** — Fallen leaves provide habitat for insects and forage for birds. No need to cut the plant stems in your garden either, insects will overwinter inside the stems and birds will eat the seed heads.

9. **DON'T MOW IN WINTER** — Waiting to mow until early spring leaves standing cover as protection and food for wildlife.

10. **PARTICIPATE IN CITIZEN SCIENCE —** Research doesn't only happen in the summer, you can stay involved through the winter too! Get involved with local citizen science projects like Christmas Bird Counts and Project FeederWatch.