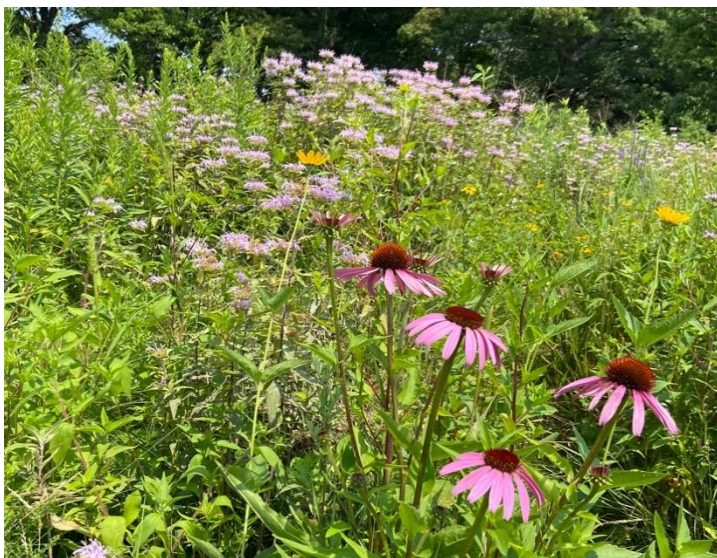




Managing Native Gardens for Wildlife



In the early spring, the seed heads can be cut from the stems to create habitat for cavity nesting insects. Small carpenter bees will make their nests in the wildflower stems of bee balm, coneflower, and many other native plants. During spring cleaning, make sure to leave 8-24" of stem above the ground to help create the ideal habitat for insects. The tops of the plants can be composted or left as mulch in the bed. Leaf litter can be left in the beds as well to recycle nutrients back into the soil.



For the winter, seed heads and flower stalks can be left intact. The seeds provide food sources for birds and other wildlife in the winter and the stalks provide overwintering sites for insects. Birds particularly like sunflowers, asters, goldenrod, coneflowers, and blazingstars for winter seeds.



In the summertime, watch the plants grow! Leave the remaining stalks in the ground, and let the plants grow around them. It is also important to get outside and keep up with weeding. Early detection of weeds allows for removal before they seed out and spread to other areas of the landscape. Exotic and invasive weed species are particularly important to remove from the landscape as soon as they are discovered.