



In Maryland, where our winters can get brutally cold, many of our local butterflies need plant stalks and fallen leaves to survive. If you want to help them out, save your garden clean-up for the Springtime, and come to appreciate that an untamed garden is full of life!

Many species spend the winter as youngsters; either as an Egg (Hairstreaks), Caterpillar (Viceroy, Pearl Crescent) or Chrysalis (Swallowtails, Azures). Their camouflage makes them difficult for us and would-be predators to see. If you can spot them, these are often found attached to plant material in your garden.

With small bodies and fragile wings, it is amazing that some butterflies spend the winter as an adult butterfly (Question Mark, Comma, Mourning Cloak). These species stay protected from the cold in the leaf litter, under tree bark or unheated buildings. If we have a winter day that heats up to 55*, you may see a Mourning Cloak out basking in the sun.

The amazing Fall Migration of the Monarch butterfly is well known to many people, but there are other species that sometimes migrate South for shorter distances for warmth and food. (Painted Lady, Common Buckeye, Cloudless Sulphur). Home gardens that provide host plants for the caterpillars and a variety of nectar plants that bloom throughout the growing season will support our stay-at home butterflies as well as those just passing through.