

LEAVE the leaves

Leaf litter is essential for many insects and other animals, providing habitat, nesting materials, and protection.

Removing leaves disrupts ecosystems, affecting biodiversity and plant health.

Benefits of Leaf Litter

Leaf litter provides shelter and nesting areas for many important bugs and animals.

Leaves contain nitrogen and other important plant nutrients, which are released back into the soil through decomposition.

Fallen leaves make for a great, free mulch to add to landscape beds. Mulch protects plant roots and increases water retention in the soil.

Leaf Litter Locals

While many bugs make use of leaf litter for shelter and nesting, here are some you might see in our area...



Two-striped walkingstick
Anisomorpha buprestoides



American bumblebee
Bombus pensylvanicus



Common pill woodlouse
Armadillidium vulgare



Luna moth
Actias luna

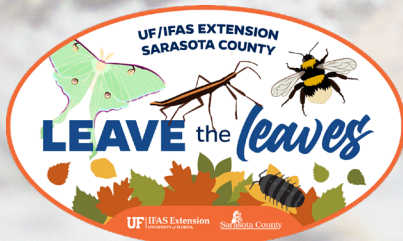
LEAVE the *leaves*

Support Our Local Bugs


What can you do to help them? Follow these three tips:

- **Leave the leaves year-round.**
 - Leave leaves where they fall and use them as mulch, or gather and add to compost.
 - Keep leaves out of water bodies or entry points, such as stormwater drains.
- **Create bug-friendly spaces.**
 - Minimize pesticide use by following an integrated pest management (IPM) plan.
 - If using pesticides, do so responsibly and according to the label to minimize environmental risks.
- **Spread the word!**
 - Share this information with others, so they can do the same.

Get a FREE Bumper Sticker!



Help get the word out about the importance of leaf litter for our local bugs.

Scan the QR code  to request your free sticker, then pick it up at the Sarasota County Extension office.



Resources

- “Leave the Leaves” blog: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_leavetheleaves
- Find upcoming classes, workshops, trainings and more: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_ebcite
- Learn responsible pest management techniques: tiny.cc/ufsaraext_cite

QUESTIONS?

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