

## Mattawan Later Elementary Native Prairie Garden – Parents welcome!

Our teaching garden is an outdoor classroom for all children to explore and all teachers to use. If you are interested in joining the Garden Planning Committee (made up of parents and teachers), please contact the Later EI Office. In January, we'll be planning for spring! See more about the garden on the Later EI school website, under "News/Info."

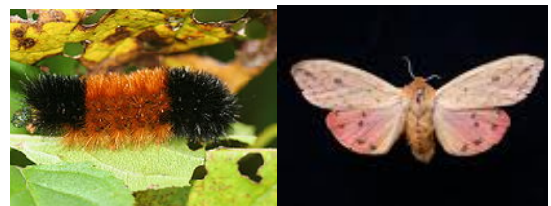
## What's going on in the Garden...in November?

Who will use the garden in the winter?

The main reason the prairie garden is not clipped back, mowed or "cleaned-up" for the winter is to provide habitat for insects, birds, and other fauna during the winter.

Many insects either hibernate or lay eggs in the plants and/or debris within our garden.

- A perfect example is the Woolly Bear (also known as the Isabella Tiger Moth). In the fall, we see lots of these insects because they are actively looking for a cozy, protected place to stay over the winter. In the spring, they will form a cocoon and emerge as a moth to continue the next generation.



Woolly Bear - Isabella Tiger Moth

- Another insect seeking refuge for the winter is our native Ladybird beetle. These beetles hibernate outdoors during the winter, and right now they are seeking nooks and crannies that are protected from the strong and drying winds of winter.



Did you know? Nearly all of the Ladybird beetles that seek shelter in our homes are not native to our country. See the distinctive "M" mark near their heads? They are from Asia and are not adapted to our winter weather. Thus these insects enter our homes, sometimes in great numbers!



Seven-Spot      Convergent  
Native Ladybird Beetles

Some feathery friends from the North are starting to appear in our garden. Leaving the stalks of the grasses and wildflowers in the native plants garden during the winter will provide shelter for birds.

- A perfect example is the Dark-eyed Junco. These little songbirds, also known as Passerines, spend their summers north of here. As the cold weather approaches, they head south to Michigan to spend their winters. What other songbirds from the North spend their winters in Michigan?



Dark-eyed Junco