

From: [Lorraine Johnson](#)
To: [councilmeeting](#)
Subject: [WARNING: UNSCANNABLE ATTACHMENT]My comments for 2021.IE23.5 on July 14, 2021 City Council
Date: Tuesday, July 6, 2021 11:24:46 AM
Attachments: [FINAL Gmail - Project Swallowtail support letter for delaying yard waste collection by 4 weeks.webarchive](#)

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the July 14, 2021 City Council meeting on item 2021.IE23.5, Supporting Biodiversity in Toronto - Changes to Spring Yard Waste Schedule

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments (below and also attached as a PDF):

To City of Toronto Councillors and Mayor Tory

From the Steering Committee of Project Swallowtail (www.projectswallowtail.ca)

Re: Delaying Yard Waste Collection in order to support pollinators

July 5, 2021

We are writing to you as Steering Committee members of Project Swallowtail (www.projectswallowtail.ca), a collaborative initiative to enhance pollinator habitat in Toronto by supporting residents in their efforts to create and maintain native plant gardens in yards, boulevards, community gardens and other public spaces.

We do this work through outreach, education, and training, as well as through native plant distribution and planting events. In our professional capacities as ecologists, entomologists, and botanists, we support a rapidly growing network of Block Ambassadors who amplify this work at the micro-level of streets and neighbourhoods.

It is clear that residents of Toronto are keen to take action in support of pollinators and that residents will take action when provided with the educational and practical tools to do so.

One of the barriers to this work is that municipal yard-waste collection currently starts in March, when bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects are still using dead leaves, stalks and other yard “debris” as crucial nesting habitat and protective cover. March yard-waste collection inadvertently causes the destruction of habitat and the death of countless insects—the next generation of bees, butterflies and other beneficial species.

Thus, we are writing to offer our whole-hearted support to the proposal from Solid Waste Management Services, passed by the Infrastructure and Environment Committee, to delay yard-waste collection from single family residential and multi-residential properties by four weeks, to start yard-waste collection in late April instead of late March.

We commend Solid Waste Management Services on this initiative.

Likewise, we offer our whole-hearted support to the public education component of this initiative.

We urge the City to engage in a robust campaign of public education to explain the ecological benefits of not only delaying yard-waste collection in spring, but also of maintaining habitat features such as dead leaves and stalks in yards throughout the year.

Delaying yard-waste collection to late April will have significant benefits for those species that emerge in early spring, but there are many species that depend on dead leaves and stalks year-round. For example, some species of moths don't emerge from their cocoons in leaf litter until mid-May, others in mid-summer, and still others in the autumn. Likewise, while some native bee species emerge from their nests in the ground or in leaf litter in early spring (and thus will benefit from delayed yard-waste collection), other native bee species lay their eggs in dead plant stalks in spring and the larvae develop in those stalks throughout the summer and hibernate in the stalks over the winter.

The public education component of this initiative offers a valuable opportunity for the City to educate residents on the year-round ecological benefits of "debris" such as dead leaves and stalks, and, indeed, to reframe "debris" as valuable year-round habitat. As this message takes root and becomes common practice, one of the economic benefits is that it will save the City money because yard "waste" will be managed on properties, for the benefits of pollinators, rather than requiring municipal resources of collection and composting: a win-win for the environment and for the City's budget.

Respectfully,

Lorraine Johnson (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), author of books on native plant gardening

Pete Ewins (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), Wildlife conservation specialist and landscape consultant

Sharon Lovett (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), High Park Nature

Clement Kent (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), Department of Biology, York University

Jode Roberts (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), Senior Strategist and Lead, Nature in Communities Program, David Suzuki Foundation

Colleen Cirillo (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail)

Kathleen Law (Steering Committee member, Project Swallowtail), Integrated Conservation Manager, Pollinator Partnership Canada