

Solid Waste & Recycling Newsletter

Leaf Me Alone: Why You Should Keep Your Leaves In Your Yard

As the leaves continue to fall, many of us will use our time or money to rid our lawns of leaves. Keeping our leaves nearby is a simpler, more environmentally-friendly solution, as leaves contain nutrients that are good for the soil.

Here are some ways to make the most of your leaves:

- **Mulch your leaves in place.** Shred your leaves with a lawn mower and leave them on your lawn. It's faster and easier than raking or leaf blowing and adds nutrients to the soil.
- **Add shredded leaves to your garden and landscape.** Shredded leaves can be used as a mulch to help prevent weeds and keep moisture in the soil. The leaves will also slowly release nutrients into the soil.
- **Save your leaves for composting.** Leaves are a great source of "browns", materials rich in carbon, that are needed to balance the "greens", such as food scraps and grass clippings, in your [home compost](#) pile. One of the biggest challenges to composting food scraps at home is the release of water into your compost pile as the food breaks down. One of the best ways to fix this is to add leaves every time you add food scraps (*Compost tip: shredded leaves absorb water better than whole leaves*). Compost provides nutrients, improves soil structure, absorbs and holds in moisture, and adds beneficial microorganisms.
- **Insulate your compost bin for the winter.** Place leaves around and on top of your compost bin. This will insulate your bin and allow the material to continue to breakdown. In the spring, you will have fresh compost without waiting for your pile to thaw out, and the leaves can be added to your spring compost pile.

