

DEALING WITH LEAVES

DID YOU KNOW ?

Fallen leaves contribute considerable amounts of phosphorous to our waterways and **one pound of phosphorus can grow up to 500 pounds of algae.**

What Can You Do?

- Blow leaves back onto the lawn and mulch on the lawn
- Mulch leaves by making several passes with a power mower. (the shredded leaves will provide nutrients back to your lawn)
- Compost your leaves into mulch to place around your vegetables and flowers
- Spread leaves in garden beds or under shrubs
- Clean leaves and debris from the gutters and storm sewer outlets
- Put a tarp over leaf piles between pick-up times to prevent them from blowing away
- Follow your community leaf collection policies and schedule



WHY?

- Leaf litter can block gutters and stormwater drains and cause flooding
- Submerged leaves act like a hat, blocking out the sunlight that underwater plants need to grow.
- Less sunlight can change the water temperature, affecting both the plants and animals that live there.
- Increased bacterial activity is needed to breakdown the leaves, this consumes vital oxygen in the water. Reduced oxygen levels can create stagnant conditions, unsuitable for aquatic life.
- As leaves breakdown and decompose in water they add an increased nutrient load into the water body. When all other conditions are favorable, this may lead to large algal blooms.
- The decomposing leaves also release tannins which can affect the quality and color of the water.

