

WHY IT MATTERS

Keep Our Lakes Clean

Leaves contain phosphorus and other nutrients. When rain falls on leaves in the street, it makes a nutrient-rich runoff – like a leaf tea – that goes to our lakes. This “leaf tea” causes toxic algae blooms and other problems in our lakes.



Good for Pollinators



Caterpillars, bumblebees, and other beneficial insects like fireflies use leaves kept on our lawns as cover to stay safe throughout the harsh winter months.



Valuable to Your Garden

You can use your leaves as mulch, or you can turn your leaves into compost with the right mix of materials and tools.



Leaf Resources

More information about how to manage your leaves, from composting guides to collection guidelines, can be found on the Streets Division’s yard waste website.

Contact Info

Streets Division East
608-246-4532

Streets Division West
608-266-4681

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cityofmadison.com/YardWaste



CONQUER YOUR LEAVES



Protect our lakes, help pollinators, and defend your lawn by following this guide.

Leave the Leaves



If about 20% of your lawn is covered with leaves, you can just leave the leaves where they fell. They will decompose on their own and give beneficial insects additional spots for cover during the winter months.

Mulch the Leaves



Around 50% of your yard is covered in leaves? Try mulching. Keep the leaves whole and use them like mulch around your garden. Remember, mulch should be around 2 inches deep. Or, just use your lawnmower to mow leaves right where they fell to add nutrients to your lawn.

CALL TO RAKES!

The biggest impact you can have is raking leaves from the gutter before rainstorms. Doing this prevents leaf tea from being made. You can sign up to receive weather alerts and raking reminders before rain events at ripple-effects.com.



Compost Your Leaves



Mix three parts fall leaves to one part grass clippings or other greens in a container. Add the right amount of water. And in time you will have compost. Free guides with more details on how to make compost are available at libraries and from the Streets Division's website.

Follow City Collection Rules



After you've mulched all you can mulch, composted all you can compost, and left all you can leave, it's time for city collection. Place your leaves out for pickup on a set-out date for your home or take your leaves to a drop-off site. Set-out dates and rules are available on the Streets Division's website.