

Mow Your Leaves!

Don't be in a hurry to put your mower away this fall. Your mower is a valuable tool for managing leaves as well as grass. With the recent change in leaf collection service, this is a good opportunity for Ypsilanti residents to experiment with additional leaf management practices.

Mulching leaves will save residents time and effort by reducing the amount of leaves that will have to be bagged for pick-up. This will also support the City's cost saving efforts for leaf collection and disposal costs. To use your mower to mulch leaves, run the mower across the lawn which will break the leaves down into small pieces. This may take several passes over the lawn with the mower. The small leaf pieces will be visible at first but eventually decompose into your lawn over the coming weeks. For best results, use a mulching mower, raise your mowing height to better accommodate the leaf piles, and mow when leaves are dry.

Mulched leaves also make an excellent addition to a compost pile and garden beds. The small leaf pieces created by the mower will quickly break down and provide useful nutrients to your lawn and garden.

New Leaf Pick-up Procedures

On May 19, 2009 council approved a resolution to eliminate the collection of bulk loose leaves. Leaves piled in the street are one of the leading causes of street flooding due to clogged storm drains. Leaves in the gutter pan can cause damage to the street sweeper and if left in the street create problems with snow removal.

Leaves contained in compost bags or trash cans 32 gallons or smaller with a yard waste sticker placed on trash container will be picked up curbside. Curbside yard waste will be picked up on your trash day beginning the week of April 6 and continuing through the week of December 14, 2009. **Note: During the colder months it is recommended that residents use compost bags. Leaves that are frozen in cans cannot be removed.**

Residents are entitled to four passes per calendar year to take yard waste and brush to the Ypsilanti Township Compost Center at no charge. To obtain passes please visit the Ypsilanti Public Services Department located at 14 W. Forest, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197. Office hours are Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm. Proof of residency must be submitted to obtain passes. Passes must be presented to the compost facility at time of drop off.

Backyard Composting

To begin composting follow this simple recipe to build your pile:

Add 50% Brown materials (leaves, hay, straw, dead plants; source of carbon)

+ 25% Green materials (grass clippings; source of nitrogen)

+ 25% soil or compost (soil contains microorganisms that help to break down materials)

= 100% of a compost pile

1. Create or purchase a compost bin at least 3ft x 3ft x 3ft in size.
2. Add layers of leaves, grass clippings, and soil and then repeat.
3. As you build the pile, dampen the layers with water. Keep the pile as damp as a wrung out sponge.
4. After spring thaw, turn the pile from time to time.
5. With proper ingredients, turning, and moisture, your pile will yield nutrient rich compost.