



Madeleine Somerville

What TO DO With Autumn Leaves | Earth911.com

September 20, 2018

Friday, September 21 2018, 10:15 AM

What To Do With Autumn Leaves

 Gemma Alexander  September 21, 2018



Ah, fall. Back to school, sweater weather, and warm drinks. Those brightly colored leaves are beautiful on the trees, but they lose their appeal when they start falling to the ground. Now, last week's kaleidoscope of natural color become this week's tedious yard work. But even fallen leaves have value. Here are four do's and a don't for dealing with autumn leaves.

Don't Blow It Off

Don't use a leaf blower. Simply blowing the leaves off your property into someone else's is just rude. Blowing them into the street will clog storm drains and cause flooding when it rains. But even if you blow your leaves into neat piles, you're still creating a lot of unneighborly noise and pollution.

Curbside Yard Waste

Leaves are not garbage. If your city offers yard waste collection service, use it. It's the same amount of work to rake your leaves and bag them (or scoop them into a bin) for yard waste pickup as it is for garbage. Leaves thrown in the garbage usually go to a landfill, where organic matter contributes to landfill gas, the third largest source of human-related methane emissions in the U.S.

Yard waste collection programs send fallen leaves into large-scale composting facilities, where they and other organic waste is recycled into a nutrient-rich soil supplement.

Home Compost

If your community doesn't have municipal composting — or you just don't want to pay for the compost made from leaves you paid to have hauled off last autumn — you can compost leaves yourself. This is the most labor-intensive option but also the most satisfying. Compost bins can be built in a weekend and the basics of composting are