

CARING FOR LAWNS WHEN THE LEAVES FALL

Keeping up with fall yard cleanup is a challenging activity, yet is important to keep leaves from collecting in the streets and storm drains where they lead to flooding and excess nutrients in Plaster Creek. Trees are vital to healthy creeks and rivers. They provide shade, habitat, and drink lots of water that otherwise rushes to the waterways. Trees drop leaves, sometime copious amounts. Leaves are nutrient packs that are healthy for soils and plants when they break down. However, when excess leaves are washed into local waterways through the streets and storm drains, they upset the nutrient balance aquatic creatures rely on. So when leaves fall this season, what can you do to support healthy nutrient loads in Plaster Creek? Glad you asked...

MULCH

Mulching blades on the mower and mowing weekly (without the bagger) through the fall will shred the leaves into small enough pieces to break down right into the lawn soil, like fertilizer for next spring. Some types of leaves may need to be mowed over more than once.

Extra leaves can be raked into a shallow pile, mowed over, re-raked and placed 3-4inches deep on the gardens to break down over the winter (the mulched leaves will break down faster).

COMPOST

Mulch the leaves with the mower and pile in a compost area (wet, shady is good) for quick composting for garden/yard. Grand Rapids Compost Ordinance requires composting to be done in containers rather than “piles.”

LEAF COLLECTION/REMOVAL

MJR Landscape does curbside leaf pickup--no bags needed (\$69 single resident pickup, group rate available)
www.mjrlandscape.com

City of Grand Rapids - Yard waste collection takes place on the same day as a resident's normal waste collection and is in effect through Dec. 9. Residents have options for removal that fit their needs: a 96-gallon waste cart or a smaller waste bag for grass clippings and leaves, or a bulk yard waste tag for bundles of branches and twigs.

Butterworth Yard waste drop off- If city residents have a lot of yard waste, they can drop off leaves, brush and tree branches for free with proof of residency at 2001 Butterworth Ave. SW. The waste collection site is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday through mid-December.

TREE MAINTENANCE/REMOVAL AND PLANTING:

Plaster Creek Stewards—Michigan native trees available for fall planting: plastercreekstewards@calvin.edu

Kent Conservation District - fall tree sale has some leftover trees for fall planting contact Jessie.schulte@macd.org

Good Earth Tree Care LLC— Arborist services at www.goodearthtreecare.com

Ready for the next challenge? Consider adopting a basin through the Grand Rapids Basin Buddy program.

www.calvin.edu/go/plastercreekstewards

