

Leaf COMPOSTING



Mow over your leaves to break them down.

1

Use the shredded leaves to mulch around your shrubs and trees, remember mulch should not be more than a couple of inches thick and should never touch the trunk. Another option is to just leave shredded leaves on the lawn. As long as the the shredded bits fall down below the blades of grass and do not smother the grass, your lawn will benefit from the added organic matter.

Add a thick layer of leaves over existing garden beds.

2

The leaves will break down over the winter, providing a rich planting area for spring. How thick? 12-24 inches of dried leaves may sound like a lot, but they will quickly compact and break down to form an insulating blanket over your garden beds. If you are worried about leaves blowing off your bed, add a thin layer of a heavier mulch over the leaves. During a snowy winter, blowing leaves are not an issue.

Create a lazy garden bed.

3

Digging out grass or existing groundcover to create a new garden bed is hard work. Instead, let nature do it. Cover the area you would like to turn into a planting bed with thick layers of cardboard, smothering the existing plants. Then add a thin layer of greens (grass clippings, food waste, coffee grounds, etc) alternating with a thick layer of browns. Keep adding layers. The material will compost down over the winter and in the spring you will have a new garden bed, without digging!

Make leaf mould!

4

Gardeners know that rotted leaves are gold for your garden. Rake all your leaves into a pile and just leave them there. For tidiness sake, and to keep too many leaves from blowing away, you can contain your pile with whatever material works best in your landscape - a simple ring of wire fencing works well. A 6 foot tall pile of leaves will break down dramatically over the winter.

Stockpile those leaves for successful composting all year round.

5

Good (non-stinky!) composting happens when we alternate a layer of dry browns over our wet greens (food scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds, etc). Since dry brown leaves are in abundance in the fall, save them. Biodegradable bags work if you can keep those bags somewhere dry, otherwise save them in plastic bags. Each large garbage bag will provide enough leaves for a month or two of composting.



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Master Composters of Tompkins County



Questions?

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call: the "Rotline" at 607-272-2292
stop in: 615 Willow Ave, Ithaca, NY