

To rake or not to rake? This fall, consider Leaving the Leaves!

This fall, leaving some (or all) of the leaves on your property provides your yard and garden with free mulch and a habitat for beneficial insects and other small animals that need a place to shelter over the winter. If you've never tried this before, this year, consider leaving some leaves in one of your garden beds or underneath a tree.

Borough of Riverton Public Works will be happy to haul the rest as usual!

Leaving the Leaves...



- Provides you with free mulch, which is great for your grass and garden. Did you know? Leaves help control weeds!
- Provides habitat for small mammals and beneficial insects (like fireflies, butterflies, native bees, and others). Those creatures are part of the food chain and help ensure our crops get pollinated and that we all eat!
- Keeps carbon in your yard so it doesn't turn into carbon dioxide and contribute to global warming. [Learn more about the science here!](#)
- Gives you less fall work to do outside! Sit back, relax, and enjoy the fall color instead.
- Gives kiddos something to play with outdoors. Try making a leaf maze! [Learn more from the National Wildlife Federation.](#)

If you do move or remove some of your leaves, avoid using gas-powered leaf blowers. They pollute the air and contribute to global warming. [According to the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions \(ANJEC\)](#), "Gas Leaf Blower emissions for 30 minutes are equivalent to the CO₂ produced by driving a truck from Anchorage to Houston." You can [learn more about how they damage our health and the environment here.](#)

It is also best to wait until spring when the temperature is consistently above 50 degrees at night before removing leaves from your property. This will help give some of those beneficial insects homes over the winter. OR, you can also keep your leaves all year. It's great for your garden and protects beneficial insects!

[You can learn more about how and why to Leave the Leaves from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.](#) And if you want to think about planting some native plants to have an even greater positive impact on the environment, [check out the resources on our website.](#)

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Borough of Riverton, NJ, Environmental Commission and Green Team

[Visit us on the web!](#)

Resources

Kimbra Cutlip, "UMD Study Reveals the Costs of Years of Removing Leaves on Soil Health," University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences," March 20, 2024

National Wildlife Federation, "Make a Leaf Maze"

Sheila Baker Gujral, "Leaf blower bans still gaining steam," ANJEC Report, Summer 2022, 24-25

"The Noise on Gas Leaf Blower Regulation," Sustainable Jersey, May 4, 2024

"Leave The Leaves: Winter Habitat Protection," Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

"Leave The Leaves Or Lose The Insects," Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Bug Banter Podcast, September 2, 2025

Borough of Riverton Environmental Commission and Green Team



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