

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

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. 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. Learn more about the **[toxic gasses such as carbon monoxide and nitrous oxide](#)** that gas-powered leaf blowers emit. You can **[learn more about how they damage our health and the environment here.](#)**

Do not shred any excess leaves. That will kill the beneficial insects that need them to survive. And, in the spring, leave the leaves on your property so they continue to contribute to the health of your garden and yard. They do not need to be "cleaned up" in the spring. Let them break down naturally and provide you with free, nutrient-rich mulch or soil.

[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](#)** or **[Doug Tallamy's Book, Nature's Best Hope!](#)**

Borough of Riverton, NJ, Environmental Commission and Green Team

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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

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

Homegrown National Park, "**Leave the Leaves**," Accessed October 15, 2026."

National Wildlife Federation, "**Make a Leaf Maze**"

Washington University in St. Louis, "**Electric or Gas Leaf Blowers...Neither?**," November 17, 2020.

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

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, "**Leave the Leaves!**," September 17, 2026.

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For more information and updates, text "newsletter" to 888777

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