



LEAVE THE LEAVES

Leave the leaves on your lawn each fall to make your yard healthier! Leave a portion of leaves on your lawn and rake others into your garden beds. If you have multiple large trees, you may not want to leave all the leaves covering your grass. According to the Missouri Botanical Garden, grass can handle being about 10-20% covered, otherwise you may end up with bare spots. Rake extra leaves in your garden beds or around trees, add to compost, or mulch portions of it into smaller pieces with a mower. Remember to keep the roadway clear of leaves, especially around storm drains. Leaves can clog stormwater inlets and add excess nutrients to local streams.

Soil Benefits

Letting the leaves break down in your lawn adds important nutrients back to your soil. Nitrogen will be added back to your soil, which is a nutrient all lawns need to stay healthy. Leaves can also increase your soil moisture and organic matter, acting like free compost! Soils with higher levels of organic matter do a better job retaining water and contribute to soil fertility.

Wildlife Benefits

Many insects and beneficial pollinators overwinter in your leaf litter. Keeping pollinators close will ensure they are ready to pollinate your flowers and plants come spring. Fireflies are another insect that benefit from leaves. Keep populations up by giving their larvae habitat as they grow.

Educate Others

Add “Leave the Leaves” signs to your yard so neighbors know why you are leaving the leaves. If people are educated on the reasons, they might follow in your footsteps and do the same next year! Signs are available for purchase from Grow Native! and other online sellers.

Sources

Missouri Botanical Garden
Xerces Society

Learn more about environmentally friendly lawn practices at yardethic.com

