



Protect Our Lakes

Keep Leaves Out of the Streets

Leaves and yard waste contain phosphorus and other nutrients. When it rains, water flows through the piles in the street, carrying the phosphorus down the storm drains and into our lakes. The excess phosphorus from the leaves and yard waste in the street leads to toxic algae blooms, low oxygen levels, and green murky water in our lakes—none of which are good for the animals who depend on the lakes to live, or the people who use them for recreation.

Ways to Protect Our Lakes



COMPOST LEAVES & YARD WASTE

All you need is some space, a container, and some yard waste and leaves. Composting yard waste and leaves means less on the curb to blow into the streets and create the run off that harms the lakes. Directions on how to compost can be found on many online resources, including the Streets Division website, www.cityofmadison.com/streets.



MULCH LEAVES IN PLACE

Using a mulching lawnmower can grind up leaves where they fell in your lawn. Mulching them in place returns nutrients to the soil, making for healthier grass. Mulching leaves into your lawn also means fewer leaves to rake, and fewer leaves in the street.



FOLLOW YARD WASTE PICKUP RULES

Never place leaves and yard waste in the street for collection, and only place yard waste out for pickup when Streets Division crews are working on this task. When placing yard waste at the curb during collection times, choose compostable paper leaf bags, or cover the pile with a tarp to keep leaves from blowing into the street. To learn when to place yard waste out for collection and other information, visit www.cityofmadison.com/yardwaste.



RAKE LEAVES FROM THE CURB BEFORE RAINSTORMS

Removing leaves that pile up along the curb in the street, especially before it rains, is the most effective way to prevent the nutrient-rich run off from entering our lakes. The organization Ripple Effects issues email or text alerts 1-2 days before a rain event reminding you to remove street leaves. Sign up for your Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts this fall (Oct. 1-Nov. 30) on the Ripple Effects website, www.ripple-effects.com/leaf-free-streets.

