

# ACTIONS FOR HEALTHY LAKES

TAKE ACTION AT HOME TO KEEP OUR LAKES AND STREAMS CLEAN

## WHY ARE LEAVES A PROBLEM?

Leaves release phosphorus when they break down and represent one of the largest sources of urban phosphorus pollution to our lakes. When left in the street, leaves make a phosphorus-rich "tea" that washes down storm drains and directly into our lakes! Over the course of the year, more than 50% of phosphorus in urban stormwater can come from leaves in the street.

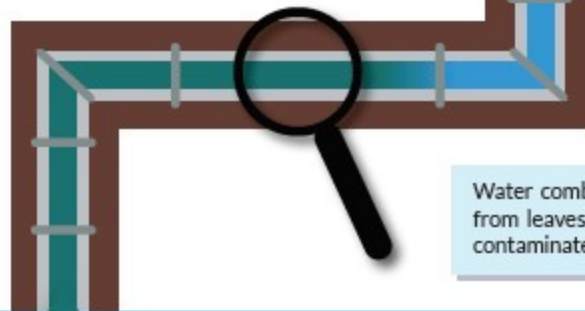
Proper yard care is a great way for homeowners to help our lakes. Have the biggest impact by raking leaves from the street in front of your home and help reduce the amount of phosphorus going into our urban stormwater!



### Did you know?

It only takes 1 pound of phosphorus to produce 500 pounds of algae in our lakes!

Water combines with phosphorus from leaves to create a "tea" that contaminates our lakes.



## HOW CAN YOU HELP MANAGE LEAVES?

**Rake them up:** The best thing you can do to help reduce urban phosphorus runoff is to rake your leaves from the street edge before it rains. Try to keep the street clear of leaves at least three feet from your curb to keep nearby gutters and storm drains clean.

**Start backyard composting:** Why dump your leaves on the curb to have them hauled away like garbage? Instead of creating a potential source of pollution, consider starting a compost pile. Compost from leaves can help your garden and planted spaces stay healthy.

**Mulch:** Leaves are an easy and cost-effective mulch alternative. You can mow leaves directly onto your yard and leave them there to provide nutrients or place the mulch around plantings. If you still opt for standard woodchips, place a bed of mulched leaves first! You'll need less mulch and will save money (and our lakes) in the long run.



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