



# Gwinnett County

## Department of Water Resources

### Leaves in the Gutter

The leaves are upon us! This Fall season, our lawns will be covered in the autumn colors of the annual leaf fall. Each of us will have a new chore to add to our weekly routine. Although leaves that litter the lawn, driveway or roadway may seem harmless, they can contribute to water pollution and should be handled as such. That means we should do our best to prevent leaves and other yard debris from entering our storm drains.

Leaves, and other yard waste, can easily find their way into our rivers and streams via storm drains and cause serious environmental and even structural damage. Decomposing leaves can affect the nutrient levels in our waterbodies which can harm our aquatic neighbors, while the volume of leaves can easily clog a drain and cause localized flooding on our roadways. Follow these simple tips about leaf disposal to ensure you are doing your part for the environment:

- Keep all fallen leaves on your property off the sidewalk and roadways
- Don't rake or blow leaves into the gutter or a storm drain
- Rake leaves away from a storm drain if possible

What to do with all these leaves you have kept out of the gutter and the storm drains? Turn those fallen leaves into compost. Composting allows you to turn those leaves into an excellent soil amendment that will help improve water retention in gardens or flower beds and will add a few nutrients to save you on fertilizer costs.

If starting a compost pile is not on your list of things to do this year, use those leaves as mulch around trees and in your garden or flower beds. Leaves as mulch can create an insulating layer to keep plant roots warmer during the winter months and can inhibit the growth of weeds. Over the next few months, those leaves will start to decompose and return nutrients to the soil.

Residents within the city limits have FREE yard debris pick-up with their trash and recycle pick-up. They can put out up to 15 lawn debris bags per week on their normal day of service, which is Thursday. They can also put out limbs that are tied in bundles that weigh no more than 50 lbs and are no longer than 4 feet.

