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Conservation Corner – Mulch Your Leaves

Each fall as the leaves turn colors we begin to think about cooler weather, kids jumping into piles of fallen leaves, and hours of raking, bagging, and removing those fallen leaves from our properties. This fall the Town would like to encourage its residents to not utilize one of its popular services, leaf collection.

In this newsletter you will see information about when the Town will be traveling through our neighborhoods with a small crew of Public Works employees. They bring with them a truck, and a leaf vacuum machine that clears the road edges of leaves that our neighbors have raked to the curb for removal. The leaves are shredded and blown into a leaf box. The truck then drives the leaves away to the landfill to be turned into compost which is used by Charles County. Each fall, La Plata property owners send tons of organic material away from their property, reducing the amount of nutrients available for future plant growth.

This fall you can benefit the environment in your own yard. First, use a mulching mower on your property, and mulch in fallen leaves to return organic material to your lawn, and reduce fertilizing needs. By taking the catcher off your mower, the grass and leaf clippings will fall below the blades of grass and decompose into natural fertilizer.

If your home has more leaves than you want to mulch back onto the ground, consider composting. Each autumn, trimming, weeding, and raking generates a lot of organic material. By composting, natural processes will biodegrade that material, and turn it into valuable mulch you can reuse on your property. By mulching plants and trees organic material is added to the soil, which helps retain moisture, and keeps roots warm during the winter and cool during summer months.

Using greener landscaping techniques, keeping organic material on your property, using appropriate plants and seed varieties result in a beautiful property and healthier landscapes that are good for the environment as well. It will not only help your yard, but save the Town staff time spent collecting and disposing of yard waste, reduce fuel consumption of Town vehicles, and reduce wear on equipment. Please think about alternatives before raking your leaves to the curb this fall.