

# RAKE THOSE LEAVES!



Don't let the forecasted cool weather catch you off guard. Piles of leaves have been falling to the ground and will need to be raked up before heavy snowfalls. Here's why:

- Leaves left on lawns can contribute to snow mold in the spring, which can damage large portions of your lawn.
- Leaves from trees and shrubs that had insect or disease problems this season must be cleaned up and discarded. If left behind, you are providing insects and disease a spot in which to overwinter.
- Clean leaves that you rake up are an excellent source of mulch for tender roses and shrubs such as Rhododendron and Endless Summer Hydrangea.
- Clean leaves are also a fantastic soil amendment for vegetable gardens; simply till into the top 4" of soil, and as the leaves break down they provide valuable nutrients and improve soil texture. Leaves contain 50 to 80 percent of the nutrients a plant extracts from the soil and air during the season!



## Shred 'em!

For leaves to break down quickly in a composter or veggie garden, the leaves must be shredded. Use a Shop Vac or leaf vacuum to gather your leaves, they do a great job of chopping up the leaves into a fine mulch. Alternatively, run the lawn mower over your pile of leaves (with bag on).