

## **“What are Wilton residents supposed to do with their leaves?” On-site composting is the principle means to deal with our leaves.**

Wilton does not have a centralized composting facility, so homeowners are responsible for finding space on their own property. With the vast majority of residents owning at least one and more likely two acres, there should be ample room to compost on-site. If you are not inclined to work with compost piles, leaves can be blown or hauled into the woodlands that surround our lawns. Any resulting piles should be kicked apart to loosely spread and allow for decomposition. Care needs to be exercised when wetlands and watercourses exist. The wetland can still accept the leaves, but the leaves should be distributed broadly and not piled in the same location year after year. This will result in filling the wetland, which is prohibited. Leaves should never be blown or deposited in streams or other waterways. In addition to creating a nutrient overload, the leaves can also cause blockages and subsequent flooding.

Perhaps the easiest method to compost is using a mulching mower weekly throughout the fall. This option not only does away with the unnecessary chore of bagging or hauling leaves; it feeds the lawn. Over the course of the winter and spring, the bits of leaves decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil that sustains your lawn. On the town's website, go into the Conservation Department page for an article touting the benefits and how to's on mulching leaves, "Improve Your Soil By Raking Less," or see the commission's spring 2007 newsletter.

Lastly, some portion of your leaves can be used to winter mulch planting beds and gardens. The decomposed leaves will protect perennials and feed the garden.

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