

Why Shouldn't I Blow My Leaves and Grass Clippings Into the Street?



The Village of Almont and the Department of Public Works would like to educate residents about the impacts of certain practices on the stormwater system and provide information about proper yard waste disposal practices.

Grass clippings and leaves blown or swept into storm drains or into the street harms waterways and our creeks. Storm drains flow into pipes and into drainage ways. When anything but rain and snow melt goes down the storm drain, it can become a drainage problem. Improper disposal of yard waste, including leaves and grass clippings, have the potential to impact both the water quality and cause drainage problems during a storm event.

Did you know?

- When yard waste is discarded or blown into a stormwater inlet or onto the street system, it can cause flooding problems. Leaves and yard debris can block the natural flow of water in the storm drainage system, which can cause water to back up and flood within the drainage system or the creek.
- When yard waste is discarded within the stormwater drainage system, it will decompose. Decomposing yard waste can supercharge the creek with nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, causing algae blooms resulting in low dissolved oxygen. Severely low dissolved oxygen levels in creeks can cause fish kills. According to the U.S. EPA, phosphorus is one of the most troublesome pollutants in stormwater runoff and it is considered the primary cause of water quality problems in our waters.
- When yard waste is discarded within the stormwater drainage system, it can bring harmful chemicals into the creek, including fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. While these chemicals can be used to protect grass, they will harm aquatic life and cause additional adverse effects to water quality when released into streams.

Proper Management and Disposal

- Grass clippings can be left on the ground to improve the health of the lawn itself. There is no excuse for sweeping grass and/or leaves into the storm drains or waterways.

- It is the policy of the Department of Public Works to sweep the streets of harmful substances that may contaminate the environment and to remove potential debris that may clog our storm drains. The Village street sweeper can barely keep up with the leaves already on the ground; please don't add to the burden by sweeping or blowing leaves or grass clippings into your streets. Consider starting a compost pile for leaves and yard waste or invest in a mulching blade for your lawn mower.

- Leaves and yard waste can be bagged and left for trash pickup by Emterra Environmental, April through November on the normal collection day. Yard waste must be placed in a biodegradable paper bag or in a trash container marked with a large X. Yard Waste Stickers to be placed on your containers, are also available at the Village Office. The Village DPW picks up leaves raked to the curb **ONLY IN THE FALL.**

We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining the quality of our state's water by practicing the yard waste disposal methods discussed above. If you have any questions, or require additional information, please contact the Village Office 810-798-8528.