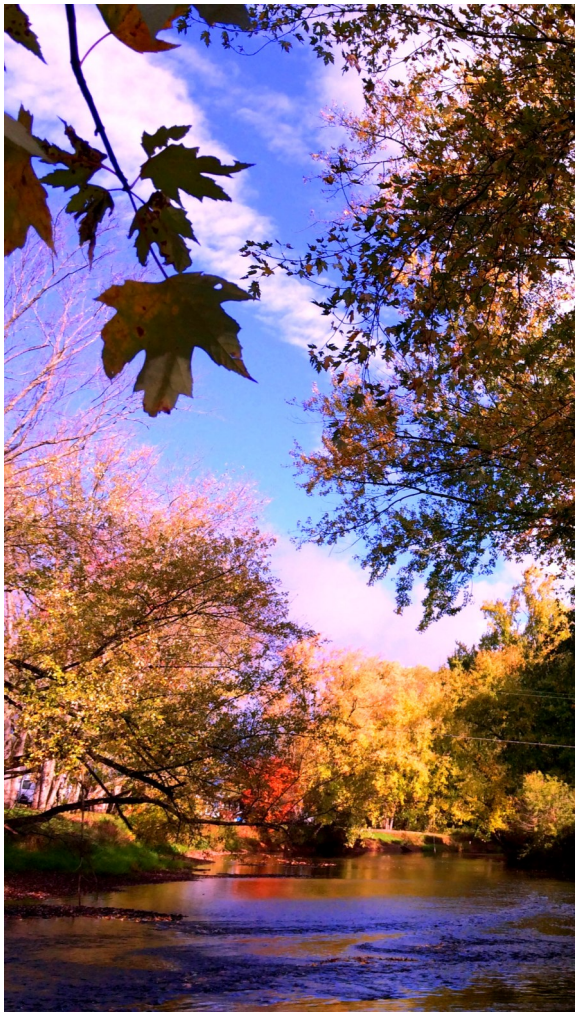
Leaves and grass clippings are a resource that have benefits to the environment when managed properly. They should never be dumped into a lake , waterway, or storm drain.

PLACE STAMP HERE

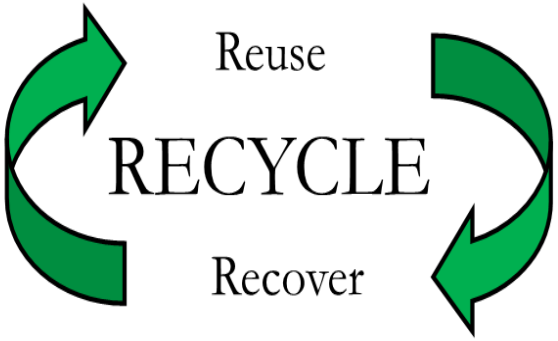
Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA)
c/o Erie County Department of Environment and Planning
95 Franklin Street, Room 1077
Buffalo, New York 14202



KEEP OUR LAKES & WATERWAYS CLEAN

Properly Managing Your Yard Waste

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance



Keep Yard Waste Out Of Waterways & Lakes

The Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance reminds you to manage your yard waste responsibly. When yard waste accumulates in the street, rain can carry it into storm drains and ultimately into waterways and lakes. Too many leaves and grass clippings in waterways cause algae blooms, which in turn soaks up oxygen required by fish and other aquatic species. In addition:

- Grass clippings are naturally high in nitrogen.
- Leaves are naturally high in phosphorous.
- Leaves, clippings, and branches can plug drains and cause flooding.

Nutrients

Nutrients in yard waste, including nitrogen and phosphorus, are released into water during decomposition. Algae and aquatic vegetation feed on these nutrients and can grow very rapidly when there are large quantities of nutrients. These nutrients are found in many lawn fertilizers as well.

We Have Options

It's illegal to dispose of yard waste into lakes and waterways.

Yard waste is produced from pruning, lawn mowing, and other routine plant care activities. Composting is an optimal method for reducing the volume of organic waste that can pollute our waterways. It returns nutrients to the soil to benefit growing plants. In addition:

- Organic matter improves the drainage and aeration of clay soil.
- Composted material helps sandy soil hold water and nutrients.
- Compost holds moisture "like a sponge" and releases fertilizer nutrients more slowly.
- Composting helps to increase the activity of earthworms and other natural soil organisms that are beneficial to plant growth.
- Composting also helps reduce the amount of waste going to landfills.

Yard waste pollutes our lakes and waterways

Municipal Collection

If you live in a City or Village, chances are good that there is a municipal yard waste collection and recycling program in your community.

Contact your City or Village Clerk or Department of Public works to learn more about local yard waste recycling programs and ordinances.

The Dos and Don'ts

- **Do** participate in municipal yard waste collection and recycling programs.
- Don't burn leaves and other yard waste.
- **Do** turn yard waste into a valuable resource by composting.
- Don't dispose of dirt and organic material into waterways and lakes.
- **Do** mulch grass clippings and leaves into your lawn because they are a natural source of nitrogen and phosphorous (fertilizer).

Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance

Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie counties working together to protect our water resources.

www.erie.gov/LEWPA