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Keep Autumn Leaves off the Ground and out of the Storm Drain

It is that beautiful time of the year again. The season of Autumn is when the tree leaves change from green to vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows. With this seasonal change, the deciduous trees begin to shed their leaves and consequently, bestow more yard work upon every household's lawn maintenance designee.

How do you handle and dispose of the leaves that fall in your yard? For a lot of people, the easy solution to clear their lawn from the influx of leaves is by raking or blowing the leaves into the street and therefore, directly into a stormwater inlet such as a catch basin or curb inlet.

What people do not know is that leaves, and landscaping trimmings, clog stormwater systems, preventing water from entering the drainage system. The redirection of the water flow, by preventing the stormwater runoff from entering its designed system, can cause localized flooding and damage to property and infrastructure. Not only can improper disposal cause flooding, but it can also impair our water resources. Leaves in the stormwater system begin to decay, releasing nutrients that encourage algae blooms and therefore, depletes oxygen content in water and suffocates aquatic life.

Advice: Never blow or dump leaves, grass clippings, needles, and other yard waste into the street, stormwater drain, drainage ditch, or surface water. Instead, dispose of yard waste by bagging them as solid waste. Alternatively, you can recycle this organic yard matter by using a mulching mower, adding it to your compost bin, or spreading it as a protective mulch. Don't wait until after the storm to do your yard maintenance.

Just remember – no one wants to be the one responsible for street flooding in their neighborhood. Do the right thing and keep our storm drains free and our waterways clear!