

FACT SHEET OF THE MONTH

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH FACT SHEET

TURN YOUR AUTUMN LEAVES
into a
BEAUTIFUL SUMMER LAWN



Mother Nature has been dealing with falling leaves for quite some time and we could learn a thing or two from her.

Autumn leaves can translate into a beautiful summer lawn next year instead of a back breaking chore.



The Natural Process

Trees take up nutrients from the earth and convert them into leaves. When the leaves fall in the autumn and decompose they release nutrients back into the soil. When you rake leaves up before they have a chance to decompose you short cut this natural process. After several years the soil has less nutrients to provide to your trees, your flowers, and your lawn. The result: a browner lawn next year. To make up for the resulting brown tinged grass, homeowners pay for nutrients at the store, i.e. fertilizer!

Why not save yourself some money, time and energy by keeping those leaves on your lawn without smothering it, of course.

Enter the Lawnmower

Today's mulching lawnmowers are not only good for mulching grass, they are also excellent at mulching leaves. Mower blades can easily shred leaves into pieces approximately 1/10th of their original size! These tiny pieces of leaves will disappear over the winter months with the help of the many earthworms that reside in your lawn releasing all those nutrients back into your soil.

Remove the bagging attachments according to your operating manual for your machine. Follow these tips for a successful mulch:



1. To achieve a good mulch set your lawn mower height to three (3) inches.
2. Run the mower over the lawn while walking slowly which will give the blades plenty of time to shred those leaves. Make sure the leaves are dry when you mulch.
3. If you have a side discharge chute begin by mulching the outside perimeter first and blow the mulched leaves into the unmowed area. Continue mowing inward.
4. If your first pass leaves a large amount of whole leaves, go back over them at a right angle to the first cut.
5. Add your bagging attachment to bag shredded mulch that you can spread on your perennial flower, herb, and vegetable gardens. It's best to wait until after the first hard frost and layer two (2) to three (3) inches of shredded leaves. This will help to keep your plant roots from frost damage and add nutrients, too.

