**This Fall, Remove Leaves from the Street to Protect Our Waters**

A thin layer of mulched leaves is a great natural fertilizer that can help green up lawns and gardens the following spring. Unfortunately, leaves that collect in the street each fall can clog storm drains and contribute to the “greening” of our lakes, rivers and streams. When it rains, stormwater flows through street leaves creating a “leaf tea” that is rich in dissolved phosphorus. This "leaf tea" washes down neighborhood storm drains eventually making its way to (ADD LIST OF RECEIVING WATERBODIES IN YOUR AREA OR USE “local waterways”). When stormwater runoff contains too much phosphorus, it can lead to toxic algal blooms, low oxygen levels, and green murky waters, none of which are good for the animals living in the water or those of us who use it for recreation or scenic appreciation.

The good news is that removing leaves from the street before it rains can reduce the amount of phosphorus in urban stormwater by 80% compared to no leaf removal! This fall, we challenge you to add street leaf removal to your fall cleanup routine. Request a yard sign to let your neighbors know why you’re raking the street and encourage them to join in! Community-wide participation can have a huge positive impact our waters (OR LIST LOCAL WATERBODIES).

INCLUDE A SENTENCE ON WHAT YOUR MUNICIPALITY/LOCAL GROUP IS DOING TO KEEP STREETS LEAF-FREE.

**Add street leaf removal to your fall cleanup routine. Here’s how:**

1. **Recycle leaves on your property** or follow INSERT YOUR COMMUNITY’S LEAF COLLECTION GUIDELINES.
2. **Sign up to receive Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts** (Oct. 1- Nov. 30).  Alerts will be issued (via text or email) 1-2 days before a significant rain event reminding you that it's time to remove leaves from the street.
3. **Safely remove leaves from the street** each time you receive a rain alert.
4. **Request a Leaf-free Streets yard sign** and help encourage others to take action too.

**To learn more or to sign up for Leaf-free Streets Rain Alerts, visit:** [**https://www.ripple-effects.com/Leaf-free-Streets**](https://www.ripple-effects.com/Leaf-free-Streets)**.**