



What to do with all of those fallen leaves

Fall is here and it is certainly a welcome sight! After another hot summer, I welcome the cooler temperatures and the beautiful hues of fall. I love it when the leaves on the trees start changing colors. This time of year also means falling leaves. I have a silver maple tree in my front yard that is dropping leaves like rain. So what can you do with all of those fallen leaves?

Instead of putting all of those leaves into plastic bags, destined for the landfill, why not compost them. Fall leaves can be composted and turned into fertile soil for your garden beds. First you'll need to select your location for composting. Build a compost pile in a location that is near a water source and an area that drains well. It may also be a good idea to build a compost pile near garden areas. The size of a compost pile is important and can vary depending on how much organic material is available. The pile has to be big enough to maintain heat and moisture for the development of microorganisms. Typically a compost pile should be at least three feet wide and three feet high. Tumblers and bins can be used to speed up the process if you live in a small area or have limited material for a compost pile.



A compost pile should consist of many organic layers of material. There is brown material which includes all of those fallen leaves, green material, kitchen scraps, grass clippings and green plants. It is necessary to have an equal amount of brown and green material for rapid and proper decomposition of materials. Moisten the pile of brown and green material but not do soak it. Be sure to turn or mix the compost pile. This will evenly distribute the heat generated and bring oxygen into the center to be used by the microorganisms which will speed up decomposition.

Typically, the compost process takes six months or more to complete. The composting process is dependent on the type of organic materials, environmental conditions and homeowner care of the pile itself. Finished compost is a dark, crumbly material that has a fresh earthy smell. Compost is an excellent soil conditioner.

Composting materials will allow homeowners to produce beneficial material that can be used in the garden, lawn and landscape. Returning these organic materials to the land maintains natural biological cycles. It is also an environmentally safe way to use those organic materials. If you have any questions about composting, please give me a call. Now if only I can get someone to help me rake up all those leaves. Until next time, happy gardening and have a great Thanksgiving holiday!



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