



PROTECT AIR QUALITY

DON'T BURN LEAVES!

Why NOT Burn Leaves?

- ✿ Leaf burning creates air pollution. The smoke from burning leaves contains a number of potentially toxic and/or irritating particles and gases. For those who already suffer from asthma and other breathing disorders, leaf burning can be extremely hazardous.
- ✿ Moist leaves, which tend to burn slowly, give off more smoke than do dry leaves. These moist leaves are more likely to also give off hydrocarbons, which irritate the eyes, nose, throat and lungs.
- ✿ Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas that results from incomplete burning, such as with smoldering leaf piles. After inhaling carbon monoxide gas, it is absorbed into the blood, where it reduces the amount of oxygen that the red blood cells can carry. Children, seniors, smokers and people suffering from chronic lung and heart disease are more susceptible than healthy adults to carbon monoxide effects.
- ✿ Fire hazards: with the dry weather, a fire spreading from leaf burning is a possible hazard.



What Can I Do With the Leaves?

Beneficial Leaf Disposal/Use Options

- ✿ **Mow them!** Chopping up leaves into your lawn distributes free nutrients. It is chemical free fertilizer!
- ✿ **Compost them!** Add them to your compost pile as layers to cover food waste. This balances the compost. When the compost is ready, you can apply it to your garden beds!
- ✿ Spread them around the base of trees and flower beds for **free mulch!**
- ✿ **Your community may offer leaf pickup!** Check with your local jurisdiction to see if they have leaf pickup or if they offer a bin for yard waste/leaves. Some communities offer these services for free. They will pick up the yard waste/leaves, compost them elsewhere and some communities even offer free compost back to residents. It's a win-win!



- ✿ **Save the lightning bugs (aka, fireflies)!** Many species of fireflies spend their larval stage beneath a layer of fallen leaves or even under the soil. The moist environment that the leaf layer creates is a must for many firefly larvae, since some even depend on gills to breathe! So let the leaves lie. Since many fireflies spend years as larvae, the leaves keep them warm, hidden and protected while they hibernate.

My Neighbors Burn Leaves - Are They Allowed?

According to the **Ohio Administrative Code**, you may only burn agricultural waste (i.e. leaves, brush, plant matter) if the burn area on your property is **GREATER** than 1,000 feet from any neighbor's inhabited building.

- ✿ 1,000 feet is farther than you think! It is approximately one-fifth of a mile, or about the length of three city blocks!



For more information, contact us: scph.org/air-quality | 330-375-2480

