

## What You Can Do

- Remove the bag from your lawnmower or use a mulching lawnmower. Leave the clippings to add organic matter and recycle nutrients, and avoid having to dispose of the grass clippings.
- Drop off your yard waste at the Municipal Public Works for composting.
- Start backyard composting (away from surface waters).  
See: [https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/waste/swrtas/documents/compost\\_flier.pdf](https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/waste/swrtas/documents/compost_flier.pdf) for a free "how-to" brochure.
- NEVER** dispose of leaves or clippings in or near storm drains, drainage channels, wetlands or waterbodies!

## Our Community Cares

Our community cares about clean water and is doing its part to help prevent water pollution in local waterways. This outreach message helps our community meet US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements to share pollution prevention information with its residents.



Town of Merrimack  
Public Works Department  
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Merrimack, NH

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Environmental Services 603-271-  
7889 <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/was/index.htm>



# RAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

*What to do with  
your leaves and  
grass clippings*

# Why Does It Matter?

**You Choose - your leaves and grass clippings can be a valuable resource OR a source of water pollution.**



## As a Source of Water Pollution . . .

*Decaying leaves and grass kill critters in streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, and wetlands.*

Leaves and grass clippings decompose in water and wetlands by using the oxygen that other organisms such as dragonfly larvae, crabs, and fish need to live.

*Yard waste on stream banks smothers natural vegetation.*

Leaves or grass dumped near banks, shorelines and wetlands block sunlight and smother the natural plant life that provide food and cover to animals such as turtles, ducks, chipmunks, and deer.

*Yard waste dumped near waterbodies contributes to stream algae and odors.*

Seepage from yard waste piled on or near banks and shorelines will slowly make its way into the water. Algae then grow and form foul-smelling, green mats on the water surface.

*Yard waste dumped in or near wetlands or surface waters is against the law!*

In an effort to protect wetlands and surface waters, the NH legislature passed a law that prohibits filling streams and wetlands with waste materials, including yard waste.

RSA 482-A:3

## As a Resource . . .

*Mulched leaves or grass clippings on your lawn add valuable nutrients and organic matter.*

Grass clippings provide a source of slow-release nutrients reducing the amount of lawn fertilizer needed by at least half or none. A thin layer of leaves will break down and add much needed organic matter to plant beds.

*Composting leaves and grass clippings save money.*

Compost is natural recycling. Compost can be used as a top dressing on your lawn or garden beds reducing or eliminating the need for fertilizer and mulch.

