



Dear Neighborhood Landscaper,

January 29, 2016

Municipalities across the county are working with property owners to manage their spring and fall leaves in a more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly manner. Princeton, too, is actively communicating with our residents the value of leaving one's leaves on their property.

We understand that you may provide lawn maintenance services to our residents, perhaps employing standard fall leaf clean-up methods. These standard practices – blowing leaves into piles on the street, or raking them into brown landscaping bags stacked curb-side, left for eventual town pickup – involve **unnecessary costs in terms of crew labor, dumping fees, and fuel**. This practice can also lead to clogged storm drains and excess nutrient runoff (phosphorus & nitrogen) polluting our waterways. The blowing and vacuuming of leaves, double-handling, shipping, and relocating leaves can all be avoided by mulching your clients' leaves in-place.

Shredding fall leaves (or summer grass) using a mulching mower where they are on the lawn, using shredded leaves as a winter mulch on landscape beds, collecting shredded leaves into compost piles, or simply leaving leaves under the trees in wooded areas are all examples of using nature's own method of turning old leaves into rich, new soil.

Mulching of leaves saves you time and money, and your crews will thank you not only for saving their backs from the heavy lifting but also for eliminating noise pollution and the health concern of inhaling airborne dust and mold spores kicked up by leaf blowers. Your clients will also reap the benefits of a healthier lawn, healthier landscape beds, and a low-cost, natural fertilizer come spring.

We are asking for your cooperation in accepting these alternate leaf management practices and in offering them as an environmentally sound “green practice” to your clients.

Sincerely,