

# Keep Leaves Out of the Lake!

**W**e've reached the time of year when the days begin to get shorter, the temperatures start to drop and we can all hear a collective groan as the spectacular colors of the West Hill Pond foliage descend and cover our yards. I thoroughly enjoy the vibrant cascade of chestnut, maple and oak leaves stretching around the lake, and look forward to the changing seasons. The yard work, not so much.

**B**ut, as part of the larger effort to help protect the clean, clear water that welcomes us in the spring, we should strive to prevent leaves from deliberately or carelessly going into the lake. Excess amounts of leaves in the lake can increase the nutrient levels of the water and contribute to plant and algae growth, reducing the water clarity. Leaves that fall on yards should be collected, composted or contained in fenced-in areas and placed further back on the property to help keep them out of the lake.

**N**ow clearly there are leaves that simply fall in the water or are blown there by gusts of wind. This is part of the seasonal cycle in a deciduous forest. And some of the native vegetation helps contain this: the mountain laurel and other understory plants that thrive along the lake's edge keep leaves on the land and out of the water (as well as absorbing nutrients that would otherwise flow into the lake). Maintaining these plants or adding them to your landscape will help keep West Hill Pond clear, and may save a bit of yard work this time of year. Let's all work together to keep leaves out of the lake.



## More Information ...

### State of CT DEEP Residential Composting

[http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2718&q=325370&depNav\\_GID=1645](http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2718&q=325370&depNav_GID=1645)

### West Hill Pond Association

<http://www.westhillpond.org>

## What You Can Do To Help!

- Direct your lawn care provider to keep leaves out of lake.
- Work wisely - don't try to blow leaves on a windy day.
- Blow leaves starting at the waterfront and work away from the lake.
- Encourage Laurel and other native plantings along the shore which trap leaves in autumn - leaf mulch in the landscape can be good for the lake!
- Compost leaves outside wetland regulated area, and away from the lake.
- Protect your waterfront, keep beach sand out of the lake!
- Remove leaves from shoreline before water levels return in spring.

[learn more](#)