

THINK BEFORE YOU

DUMP *(Yard waste isn't harmless... organic dumping is still dumping)*

A guide from

Westchester Land Trust

You'd never toss trash or plastic into a natural area—but what about leaves, grass clippings, or branches? While they may seem harmless, repeated dumping of organic debris can seriously damage local ecosystems.

WHAT'S THE HARM? IT'S NATURAL, RIGHT?

A few leaves or a small pile of sticks won't hurt—and might even offer some benefits. But repeated dumping can lead to:



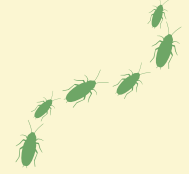
Smothered native plants and vegetation



Disrupted soil chemistry and drainage



Tree root rot and death



Spread of invasive pests and plants

EVEN "NATURAL" WASTE DOESN'T BELONG IN OUR ECOSYSTEMS IF IT'S IN LARGE OR REPEATED AMOUNTS

RESPONSIBLE WAYS TO HANDLE YARD WASTE

1 **DIY composting.** Start a compost or leaf mulch pile at home. Leaves break down into leaf mold, a rich, crumbly material that's perfect to use in your garden.

2 **Leave the leaves.** A thin layer of fallen leaves in your garden, flower beds, or yard supports pollinators, birds, and soil health.

3 **Explore local options.** Many cities and towns offer free yard waste pickup or drop-off composting services—check what's available in your area.

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