

How do leaves effect Stormwater Pollution

Although leaves may seem harmless, and are biodegradable, excess leaves pose a threat to City's storm sewer system. If they are not collected and properly disposed of, they can create various problems that affect us all.

When leaves and yard clippings are swept into the street or dumped in ditches, eventually the debris will collect in the storm drain. During heavy rains, clogged storm drains and ditches can cause flooding.

Leaves and grass clippings that do make their way to our streams and rivers release nutrients that contribute to the accelerated growth of algae, which can lead to the death of fish and other aquatic wildlife.



City of Owatonna

540 West Hills Circle
Owatonna, MN 55060-4701



Autumn Lawn Care



"Clean H₂Owatonna" is the City of Owatonna's Stormwater Management initiative to improve the quality of our water resources and protect them from harmful pollutants.

How to dispose of leaves?

With the following steps we can prevent much of the pollution from occurring:

- **Mulch:** An easy and beneficial way to deal with leaves is by mulching them back on to your lawn. Simply mow the leaves on your lawn and leave them. The mower will chop the leaves into small pieces that will decompose into your lawn and provide valuable nutrients.

- **Compost:** Adding leaves to a compost pile creates an inexpensive and nutrient rich fertilizer for your gardens. Composting is nature's truest form of recycling. The process can take place in a compost bin, or simply in planting beds, on lawns and in the garden.

- **Rake:** If leaves cannot be disposed of on your property, they can be raked and taken to the City compost site. The compost site located at 400 West 32nd Avenue, accepts a wide range of materials including leaves, grass, sod strip-pings, and pumpkins. For a small fee leaves can be dropped off and disposed of properly. More information about the compost site can be found by calling 507-455-1851 or www.owatonna.gov/488/Compost-Information

Why does it matter?

It is **ILLEGAL** for leaves and yard clippings to be dumped or blown into the catch basins, ditches, and gutters.

Not only is it a blemish on our city streets but it is in violation of the city stormwater management ordinance.

Per the stormwater management ordinance "No person shall intentionally dispose of leaves, dirt, or other landscape debris into a street, road, alley, catch basin, culvert, curb, gutter, inlet, ditch, natural watercourse, flood control channel, canal, storm drain or any fabricated natural conveyance".

Anyone found purposefully violating this ordinance, may face a petty offense and can be fined **\$300**. If you deposit materials into the catch basins, ditches, or gutters, you will be responsible for cleaning up the debris and will be liable for any harmful effects.



What can be done?

Please help us keep our storm sewers clean and dispose of your leaves the proper way.

If you see a stormwater pollution incident, please immediately report the event to the Owatonna Stormwater Management staff by sending an email to stormwater@ci.owatonna.mn.us or calling 507-774-7300 for investigation.

City staff will investigate the pollution and contact you with a resolution. When violations are identified, the opportunity will be given to property owners to correct the situation or bad practice prior to issuing a citation just like any code violation.

City of Owatonna

540 West Hills Circle
Owatonna, MN 55060-4701

Phone: 507-774-7300

E-mail: stormwater@ci.owatonna.mn.us

Web: www.owatonna.gov/stormwater