

## **More Time at Home this Fall? Keep Streets Leaf-free to Protect Our Water (OR INSERT NAME OF AREA WATERBOD/IES).**

With more (INSERT NAME OF NEIGHBORHOOD/MUNICIPALITY) residents spending time at home, fall is a great time of year to take simple actions to protect our water. If you live in an area with lots of mature trees, make a commitment to remove street leaves before the rain. It's an easy, yet very effective action that those living in the urban environment can take to reduce the amount of nutrients that wash into our waters each fall. When it rains, stormwater flows through leaf piles in streets creating a nutrient-rich "leaf tea" that travels through storm sewers making its way to our rivers and streams and can cause our waters to become green, murky and unhealthy.

### ***But Aren't Leaves Natural?***

When leaves fall in the autumn, they quickly decompose, and rain washes the natural fertilizers out of them. When this happens in a forest or on your lawn, they are recycled into the soil and trapped there helping plants grow in the spring. But when leaves, grass clippings or other organic materials are dumped near streams or creeks, natural fertilizers go right into our water, feeding algae and bacteria while depriving fish of oxygen. This affects everyone who pays for infrastructure that keeps drinking water safe, and streets free of flooding.

**Keeping streets leaf-free before the rain prevents toxic "leaf tea" and flooding. Get outside, join residents across (INSERT NAME OF YOUR COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD) and do your part to protect (INSERT NAME OF WATERSHED).**

Keep streets leaf-free this fall! It's easy! Before the rain...

1. Safely remove leaves from the street in front of your home and nearby storm drains.
2. **INSERT YOUR COMMUNITY'S LEAF COLLECTION GUIDELINES**
3. Recycle leaves on your property by composting or mulching onto your lawn

*Adapted with permission from Dane County Land & Water Resources Department*