



This brochure was created by the members of Ewing's Green Team and Environmental Commission to inform residents about making more sustainable choices in their landscaping practices.



[www.ewingec.org](http://www.ewingec.org)

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Please note that this brochure is for informational purposes only. Information is subject to change.



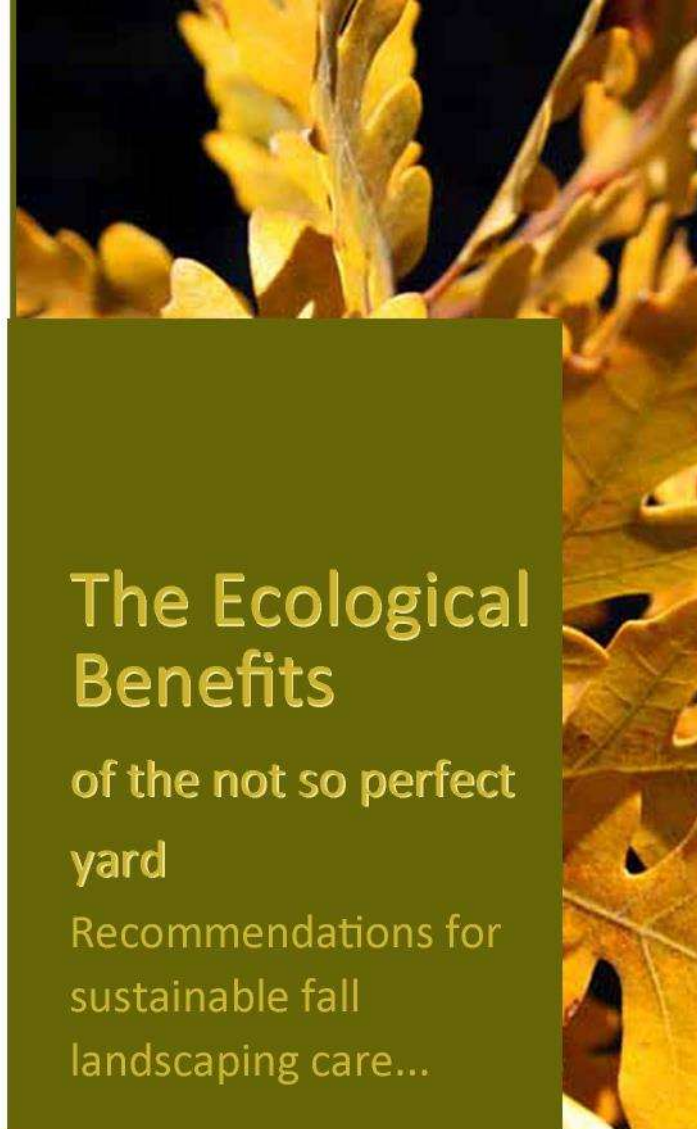
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## The Ecological Benefits

of the not so perfect yard

Recommendations for sustainable fall landscaping care...

EGT/EEC Sustainable Landscaping Series

## FALL CLEANUP TIPS

We suggest that you rethink the prevailing custom of treating leaves as waste (raking them to the curb for Township pickup). We suggest instead that you channel your inner Environmental Steward by leaf cycling. Leaf cycling, the practice of hoarding your autumn leaf drop for use in your landscape, has many benefits. They include:

- raw materials for the compost pile
- an insulating winter cover in the garden
- soil building
- moisture retention
- provision of habitat for wildlife, *and*
- reduction in Township resources allotted for fall cleanup, saving taxpayer dollars.

While you might think that this leaves the yard looking a little less than perfect, you are nourishing the landscape and providing valuable resources and habitat for the environment.







## SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING

If you wonder what you can do beyond recycling to help decrease your carbon footprint and live more sustainably, we suggest that you can (and should) support wildlife by adopting a number of changes to your autumn landscaping practices.

### THE WHY

Do you love to watch the birds, the butterflies fluttering by; get joy out of seeing the deer and the bunnies in your yard, or the squirrels at play? Did you know that opossums are veritable tick vacuum cleaners? Did you also know that while you may put out bird feeders, birds can't feed their young bird seed? Birds need a steady supply of insects to feed their young.

Amphibians and reptiles, such as toads, frogs, salamanders, snakes and others, also have a place in the backyard and fill an ecological niche. While you may not want them, most species are harmless and often beneficial, feeding on destructive insects or rodents. Bats also make a significant contribution, controlling night-flying insects, including mosquitoes, moths, and beetles. Bees pollinate flowering fruit trees and vegetables, aiding in providing about 30% of our diet.

All of these creatures need habitat to survive, the supply of which is one of our greatest challenges. We need to do a better job balancing the need to provide habitat to insure the survival of our wildlife against that of commercial interests.

Habitat requires food, water and shelter and even a small yard can support birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and small animals through proper landscaping and landscaping habits. They need more than lawn; it is important to provide trees, shrubs, and other plants (particularly native varieties) that shelter and feed wildlife.



## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT WILDLIFE THROUGH YOUR NOT SO PERFECT YARD

Your landscaping practices can help you in your quest to provide habitat and reduce your ecological impact. This is particularly so in autumn, when your landscape goes through its seasonal change. Adopting good practices in the fall leaves you well set for spring in the garden.

- **Leave your leaves on the property** (see benefits on the last page)  
*Leave them in the garden beds when you can, mow or compost them.*
- **Allow the dried flower heads to stay standing in your garden.**  
*The dark stems and flower heads of native flowers such as Purple coneflower and Black-eyed Susans look gorgeous against the snow and nothing is more exciting than seeing our small winged friends feasting upon the seed heads.*
- **Let the grass grow tall and seed**  
*Don't cut off your ornamental grasses. They*

*provide shelter for the insect that pollinate our gardens and feed our birds and other wildlife. They also look fabulous swaying in the wind and make a fabulous addition to the fall (and winter) landscape. Cut them in the spring when new foliage appears.*

- **Build a brush pile with fallen branches instead of removing them**  
*If you build it they will come. This author no sooner established a small brush pile in a back corner in the yard when it was inhabited.*
- **Leave snags on your property**  
*This one is hard in a small yard; but you don't have to leave the whole tree. You can leave a small portion as a garden ornament and wildlife will take up residence.*
- **Forget the chemicals**  
*This one is not hard. Just do it!*
- **Delay garden clean-up until spring, after several 50 degree days which allows overwintering pollinators to move on first**  
*You gave them a home all winter; don't yank it away from them too soon.*

