

Stormwater Tip for October
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Garden leaf letter credit Mary Ann.jpg

Leave the leaves!

It may be tempting to clean out your garden and landscape beds in the fall but allowing soil to remain exposed increases erosion of that soil during rain events. Due to geography, our area only has a thin layer of topsoil. Allowing it to wash away makes gardening more difficult. It takes 500 – 1,000 years (depending on conditions) for one inch of new topsoil to form, so let's work on keeping what we have! Sediment, or suspended soil, is also a stream pollutant which covers stream bottoms and damages the food web of creatures who live in our streams.

Additional benefits of allowing the leaves to cover the soil until late spring are insulation for plant roots, improved nutrient content of the soil due to leaf decay, and the creation of habitat for pollinators. These pollinators often overwinter in leaf litter and the stems of dead plants. They are an important source of protein for birds and small mammals. They are also essential for landscape health and agricultural production.