



2022 Webinars

Back to Basics: 8 Steps to a Jersey-Friendly Yard!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in Your Yard

Presented by Sandra Blain-Snow,
Ocean County Department
of Solid Waste Management



Visit JerseyYards.org/workshops-events/webinars-2022 for
information Questions? Email Karen at kwalzer@ocean.edu.

Reduce,
Reuse,
Recycle
in Your
Yard



A photograph of a garden bed filled with autumn leaves in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A blue bucket is partially buried in the leaves. In the background, there are some green plants and a wooden structure.

NJDEP Award Recipient Outstanding Education Program 2008 & 2021

About Us

Ocean County Master Composters

Trained & certified volunteers
Promote benefits of composting

Since 2000 we have helped Ocean County residents learn to compost.

Leaves Are Not Litter!

Happily embrace
your inner laziness!

Stop raking, bagging
& dragging leaves
to the curb!

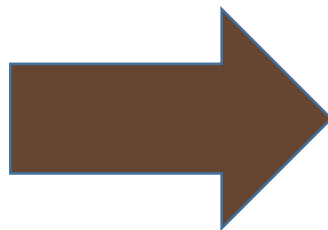
Hoard leaves for a
better garden!



From This



Annual Autumn
Chore



To This



Amazing Soil
Amendment!

Leaf Mulch is Magic!

Chopped or shredded undecomposed leaves.

Maintain soil moisture by reducing surface evaporation.

Stops growth of weeds around base of plants.

Prevents soil erosion and crusting.

Adds valuable nutrients to soil.

Keeps soil temperatures consistent.



How to Make Leaf Mulch

Shred leaves into smaller pieces with a lawn mower or leaf vacuum.

Prevents leaves from becoming an impenetrable, matted layer.

Makes a uniform mulch that breakdowns down faster to feed soil.



How to Use Leaf Mulch

Sprinkle shredded leaves around individual trees, shrubs & plants.

Use in garden beds in spring to retain moisture during hot summers.

Helps to insulate plants from freezing temperatures in fall & winter.

Leave a thin layer of leaves on the lawn and mulch to add nutrients.



Benefits of Leaf Mulch



Provides a home for overwintering beneficial insects (bees, butterflies & earthworms.)



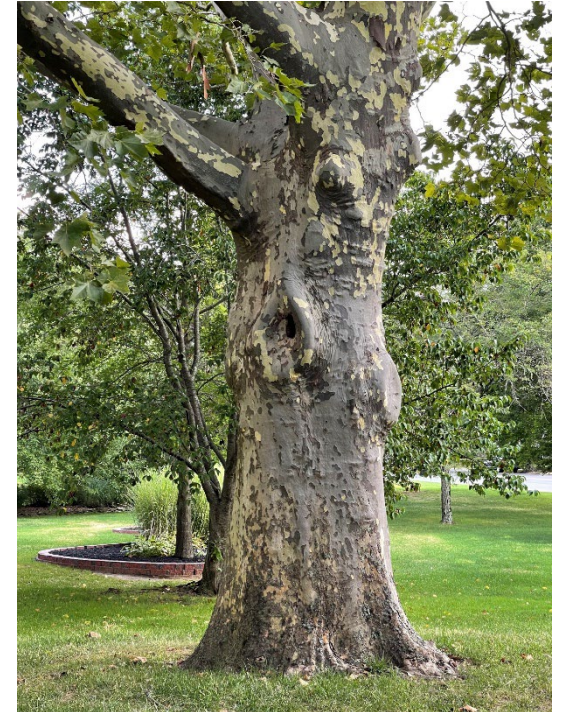
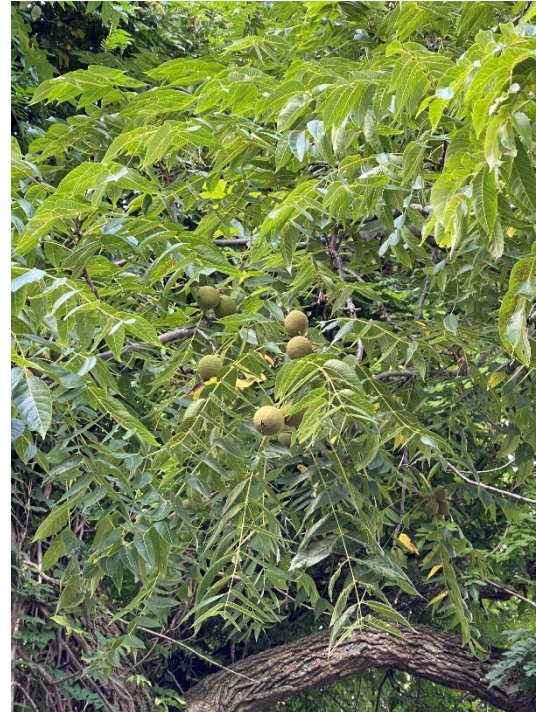
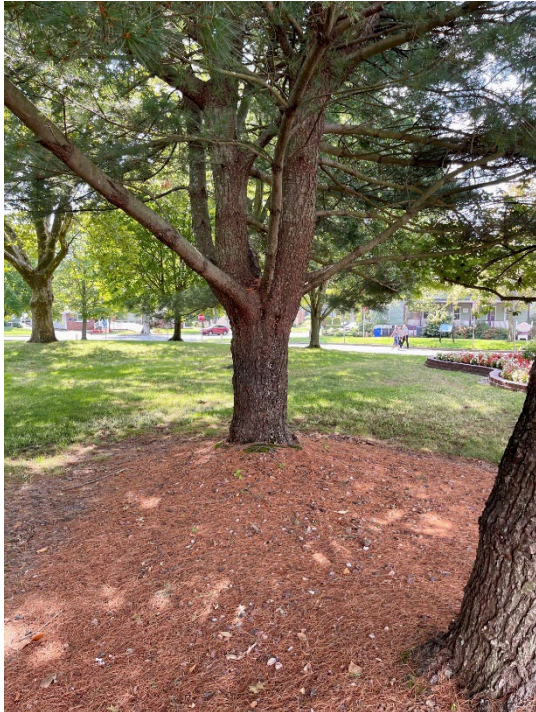
Keeps soil warm, retains water, adds nutrients back into the soil, easy & saves you money.



Benefits other backyard wildlife such as amphibians, bats, birds, mammals, and marsupials.

Know Your Leaves

Some leaves (pine needles & oak leaves) are acidic and may alter soil's pH level. Use these around acid-loving plants (azalea, rhododendron, magnolia & holly.) Avoid leaves from allelopathic trees (black walnut, sugar maple, sycamore, black cherry, red oak & black locust. These are trees that naturally impede plant growth.



Leaf Mold is Gold!

Leaf mold is partially decomposed.

Increases soil's water holding capacity.

Rake leaves into 1 area in yard and let them be.

Worms love leaf mold. Till soil & produce worm castings.

Improves soil structure by feeding soil life.

Provides necessary minerals for your garden.



How to Make Leaf Mold

The top layer of soil in a forest is a dark, crumbly, spongy material made of decomposed leaves with a distinctly earthy smell. This is leaf mold and we can make it!



- Rake leaves into a pile or place in a wood/wire bin or large plastic bags.
- Shred leaves will help them break down faster. Water thoroughly and turn.
- Let nature do the rest over winter and spring for leaf mold by summer.
- Speed up the process by adding OceanGro or grass clippings for a boost of nitrogen.

How to Use Leaf Mold

Leaf mold is a nutrient-dense option to add to your garden.



Incorporate a 2" layer into the upper 2-3" of garden beds. It works well for sandy or clay-based soils.

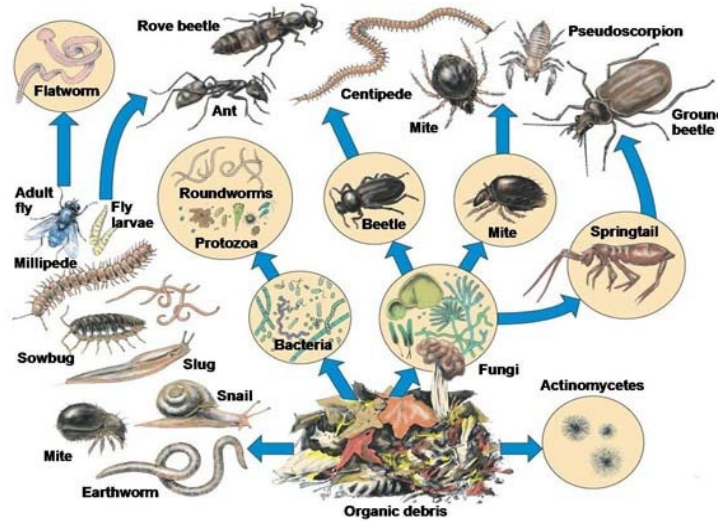


Add to bottom of raised bed or apply a 2-4" layer and let earthworms carry it deep into the soil.



Use instead of peat or coir for a potting mix. Add equal parts leaf mold and perlite for a soilless mix.

Benefits of Leaf Mold



- Ideal mulch and soil amendment for gardens.
- Aids in water absorption & retention.
- Retains heat in spring & fall. Stays moist & cool in summer.
- Gives refuge to soil invertebrates.
- Attracts beneficial insects to your garden.

Garden to Imitate Nature

Fungi – the architects of our existence

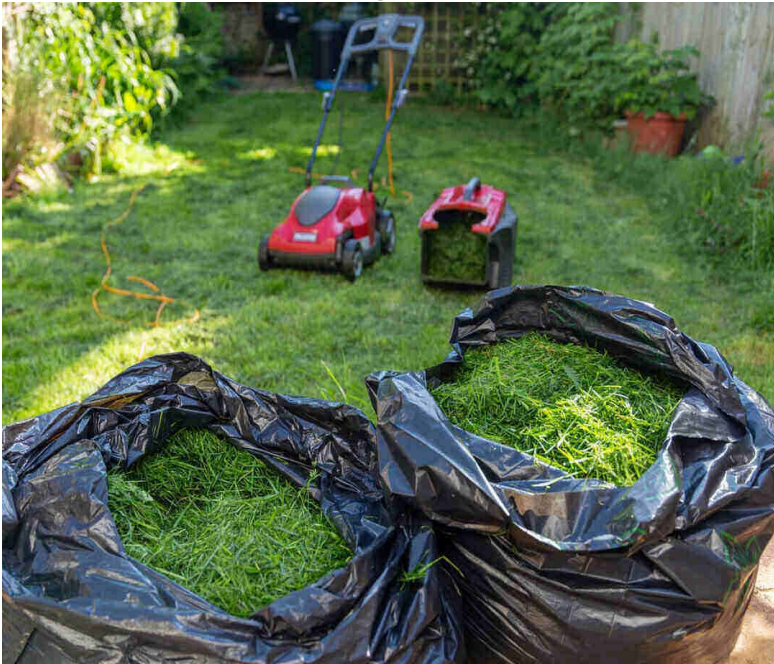


Underneath our feet is a vast fungal network with a mind of its own. It's so pervasive just the imprint of your foot, extending down into the soil, contains enough fungal cells to stretch 300 miles if placed end to end! Mostly unnoticed, you can see hints of this network, fuzzy, cobweb-like growths called *mycelium*, a fine web of cells which, in one phase of its lifecycle, fruit the mushrooms that we easily spot. This overall fungal network has been called nature's Internet or the 'Wood Wide Web'. Like the Internet it has a network-like design, where individual fungal cells merge together to form what Paul Stamets calls a neurological network of nature; a network that, like the human brain, is aware and reacts to change, but unlike ourselves, has the long-term health of the environment in mind. *How to Use Native*

Fungi to Improve Soil Quality and Bulletproof Your Food Forest Against Disease, Permaculture Apprentice

Grasscycling

- Grass clippings are a terrible thing to waste!
- Collected in mower bags that had to be emptied frequently.
- Where did they go? Landfill or rotting stinky, anaerobic piles.
- Neither option was sustainable or good for the olfactory senses.

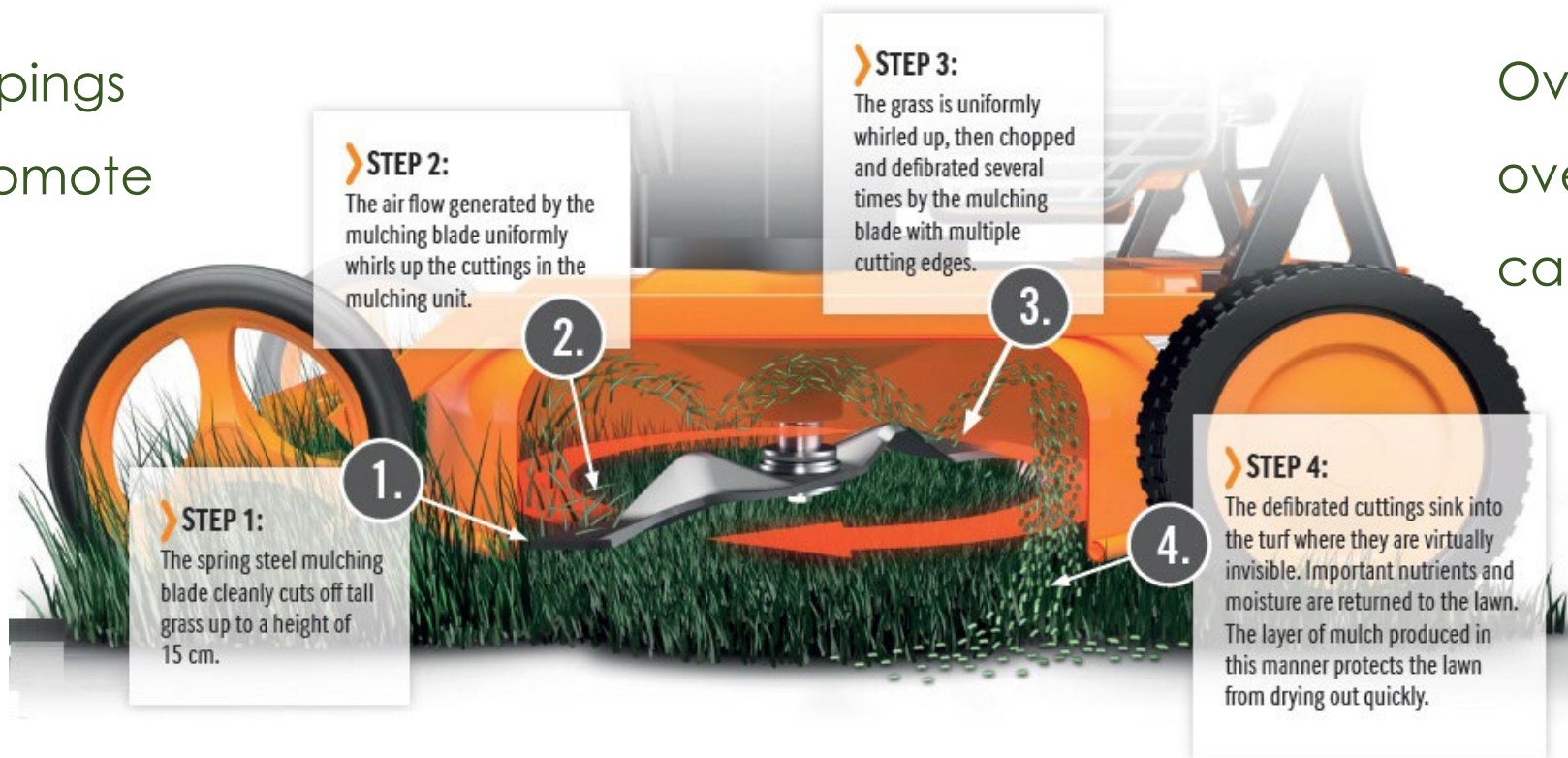


How Does Grasscycling Work?

Today's mowers cut grass into very fine clippings that add nutrients to your lawn.
Grass is high in nitrogen and if you use fertilizer, why toss all that out?

Grass clippings
do not promote
“thatch”.

Over watering &
over fertilization
cause “thatch”.



Compost Happens

Recycling/recycled
organic matter.

Humus rich soil
amendment.

Mix leaves with
kitchen/household
organic waste.

Improves soil &
plant health.

Turns “trash” into
treasure.

Saves valuable
landfill space.



Autumn is Perfect for Composting

Best times to start a compost pile. Plenty of browns(leaves, straw & cornstalks.)

Add household waste greens (fruit & veggie scraps, coffee, tea & eggshells) to yard waste.

Mix browns to greens at a ratio of 2:1- 4:1. Always more browns than greens.

Browns provide carbon and greens provide nitrogen.

Avoid, meat, dairy, grease, invasive plants & weeds.



Composting Workshops & More!

For more information on traditional backyard composting we offer FREE 2 hour workshops.

Learn the basics of composting and receive a Geo Bin compost bin. Limit 25 people.

Master Composter Volunteer Program is a 12 hour course that runs annually each fall.

Learn how to compost and teach others how to reduce their organic waste.

Receive Earth Machine Composter, pitchfork, composter thermometer & more. Limit 20 people.



Say NO to Rock Mulch



- Unlike leaf/wood mulch, rocks don't add anything to soil.
- Plants will need extra fertilizing.
- Rock beds are hotter than beds of mulch.
- Plants don't thrive in beds mulched with rocks.
- Leaves and other debris accumulate in the rocks.
- Requires fabric weed barrier or weed killer to discourage weeds from poking through.
- Needs edging to keep rocks from shifting into other areas.
- Great for rock gardens in drought prone areas or dreary government offices.

Avoid These Mulches!



- Known to attract lawn ornaments of questionable taste.
- Neighbors mistaking your yard for a WAWA.
- Cars driving through to place fast food orders.

Mulch to Dye For

- 
- Why shouldn't I use dyed mulch?
 - Are the dyes dangerous?
 - Is it bad for my plants?
 - Will my neighbors shun me?

Dyed Mulch's Dirty Secret



Old pallets, decking, demolished buildings or worse pressure treated CCA lumber.

- Doesn't break down to enrich the soil.
- Dyes not dangerous but mulch may be made from trash wood.
- Robs nutrients from plants, harms soil & kills beneficial insects.
- It's tacky. Unless your neighbors have it, don't do it!

Purchased Topsoil, Mulch & Compost

- No legal marketing standards for topsoil.
- Few companies selling topsoil have it tested.
- Darker not always better. Can be soils dredged from wetlands.
- Purchased topsoil, mulch & compost is expensive.
- If purchasing compost check for the US Composting Council seal.



**US Composting
Council**
*Seal of Testing
Assurance*



Ocean County's Recycling Centers

Free Products

We transform all brush & leaves into free products for our residents



Compost



Mulch



Woodchips

Woodchips, Mulch and Compost are available free of charge to homeowners, municipalities & non-profits.

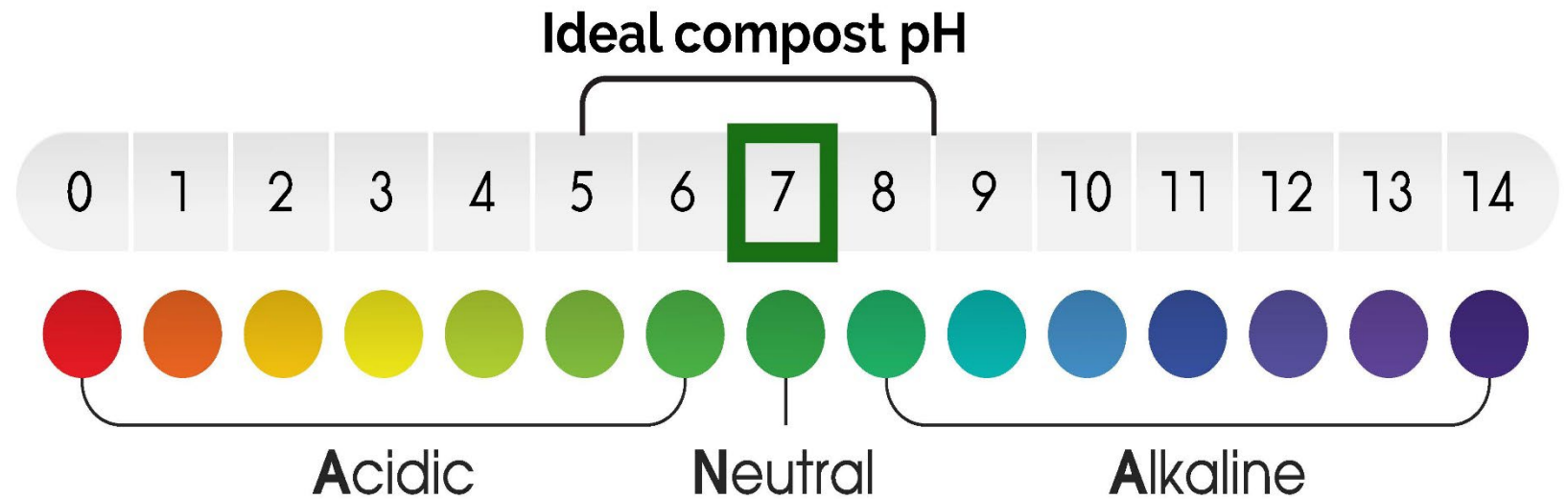
B.Y.O. Bucket If you need a smaller amount, bring your own buckets, bags and shovels.

Materials available at the Ocean County Recycling Centers in Lakewood & Stafford. Some Municipal Departments of Public Works offer these service as well.

Quality, Tested Landscape Products

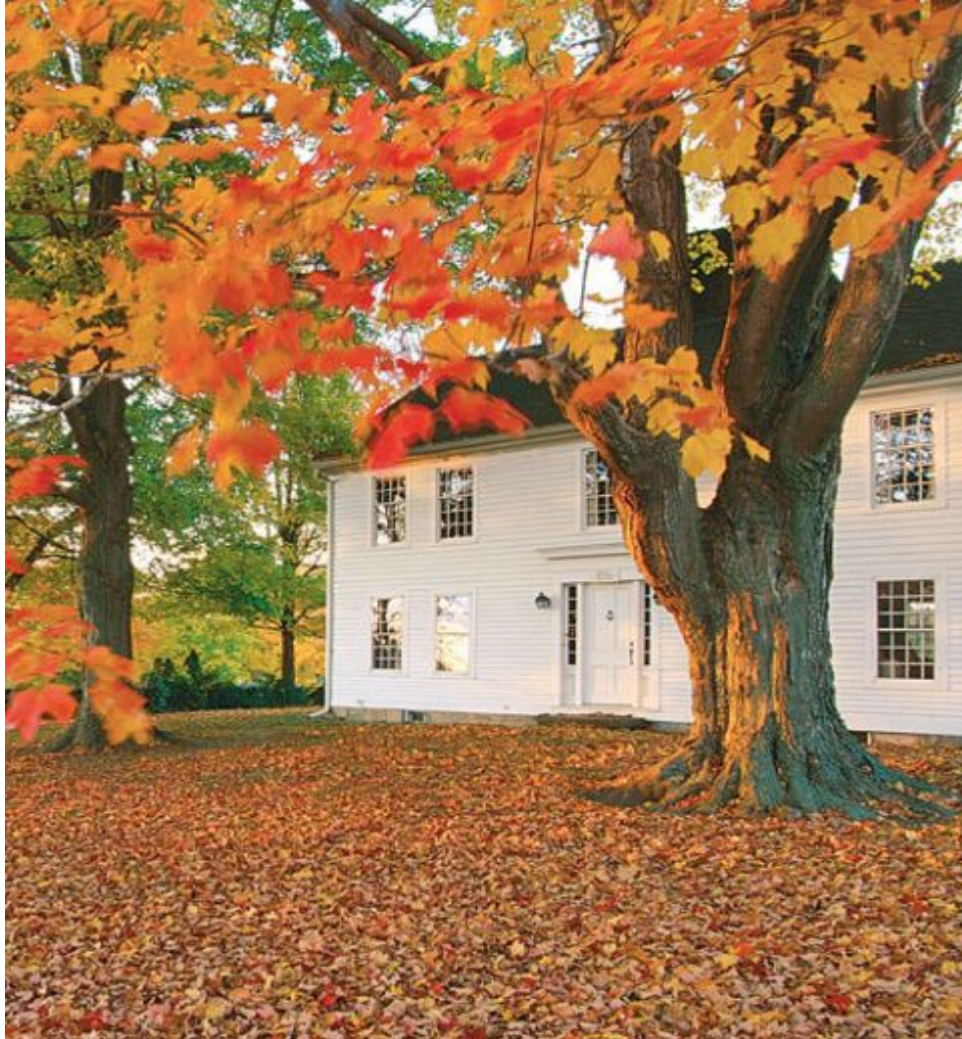


pH Scale



2021 test: Northern Composting Facility 7.1
Southern Composting Facility 7.2

Final Thoughts on Lazy Landscaping



There are so many ways to incorporate “waste that needs to be cleaned up and disposed of” and turn it into a valuable soil amendment & quality landscape product. Composting, leaf mulch, leaf mold, mulch and, grasscycling, are great ways to improve your soil with less labor than our modern landscaping habits.

Thank you!



co.ocean.nj.us/recycle compost@co.ocean.nj.us



For more information about availability of landscape products in your area, contact your municipal or county recycling center. More information on backyard composting contact your county's cooperative extension or Master Gardeners.