

Autumn's Colorful Leaves Precede Annual Chore

Some leaves in the area have already begun their spectacular autumn show of color.

But property owners know that those beautiful leaves will soon fall to the ground and they will head to the garage for rakes, vacuums or blowers to whisk them one way or another off the lawn and to the edge of the street for Sylvania Township crews to dispose of.

The crews will begin the annual collection on the third Monday of October.

The job could become a little less monumental if more property owners head to the garage and come out with the lawn mower to turn those leaves into mulch.

Barbara Northrup, of the local office of the Ohio State University Extension Service, said there are many studies which confirm that the practice of simply mowing leaves into the lawn provide nutrients to the soil and improve spring grasses.

She cautioned that the practice should not be followed with Oak leaves, which are toxic, or with leaves from diseased trees.

Otherwise, she said, mowing leaves is a beneficial practice for lawns.

It can be done, she added, whether the lawn mower is designed as a mulching mower or not.

To determine if the job has been done properly, just look behind you.

Ms. Northrup said that a fair amount of green should be showing after you have mowed a swath. That will let you know that the leaves have been chopped finely enough to fall between the blades of grass.

If some of the leaves are obscuring the grass, another sweep of the lawn mower should shred them sufficiently.

If the leaf fall is too great she said, then property owners should rake or blow the rest to the side of the roadway for township crews to deal with.

This year, that begins Oct. 15 in the northwest quadrant of the township when crews begin their first sweep over the 173 miles of roadway which interlace the township. Crews will work their way east and then south.

After they reach the southern boundary of the township, they will head back west, then head north until all areas have been cleared. The process will be repeated until the last sweep, which will start on the Monday after the Thanksgiving weekend.

Greg Huffman, township public works manager, said that each sweep of the township takes an

average of 17 days, although collections can be slowed by rainy weather or early snow.

The township prefers to use a method utilizing a large vacuum on the back of trucks to suck up leaf piles, but sometimes has to resort to front-end loaders, particularly for piles of leaves heavy with moisture.

Mr. Huffman said it is important to keep leaves free of other yard waste for the process to run smoothly. Leaves can't be collected if they are mixed with brush. He added that the leaves should not be placed near solid objects such as fire hydrants, and also should be kept on the property and not piled into the street.

For more information go to the Road Department section of the township website.

The site will also have leaf collection updates through the collection process and residents can call a special hot line for updates on leaf collection progress at 419-517-1620.

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