



Sustainable Swaps

Fall Yard Maintenance

Preparing your yard in the autumn can have huge benefits for you in the following year with a lusher lawn, fewer weeds, and reduced or no need for fertilizers and other harsh chemicals.

Mulch It, Don't Bag It!

Those autumn colors are beautiful, at least they are until they are blanketing your lawn. Don't fear, mulching your leaves is a much better alternative to raking. Mulching leaves:

- Returns much-needed nutrients to the soil for free (vs. fertilizers)
- Supports beneficial organisms like earthworms
- Are great compost for your garden beds when you have excess
- Plus! Eco-friendly by avoiding plastic leaf bags & city truck emissions



Mulch Correctly:

Clumped leaves will hurt your lawn, not help it. Tips include mulching weekly to avoid build-up (you can mulch up to 6 inches of leaves at a time), shred to the size of a dime, and make sure you can still see some grass. If you can't see grass, go over once with a bagger and use it as compost.

Aerate & Overseed: Keys to a healthy & lush spring lawn (with less fertilizer!)

- **Aeration** involves punching small holes in your yard. It loosens compacted soil and helps to circulate air, water and nutrients in the ground. This leads to a healthier lawn that will require less fertilizer and other chemicals to maintain. You don't need to aerate every year; once every couple of years will do. **Tip:** Plug aerators are much more effective than spike types.
- **Overseeding** goes hand in hand with aeration as it has more soil contact (and better germination rates). It fills in patches and keeps your lawn healthy. Fall is the ideal time to do this as the soil is still warm, the air is cool and moist, and it avoids the springtime when seedlings are new & lawn treatments can harm or kill them.

We'd love your feedback on these swaps, your sustainable swap ideas, and more on what you want to hear about for future editions. Email us at EAC@Thornbury.org.