

Mulch it. Load it. Haul it. Don't leave it behind.

Protect our community.



HOW TO SPOT A QUALITY LANDSCAPER FOR FALL:

- **The last mow.** Gradually lower your mower height to about 2 to 2½ inches until the final mow before winter. At this height, the lawn is less prone to disease, and fallen leaves can blow through rather than building up into thick mats that block oxygen.
- **Leaf collection.** Collect and remove all leaves to prevent suffocating grass or mulch the leaves to provide free, natural nutrients.
- **Is there science behind it?** A quality landscaper knows the science of a property's lawn through soil testing and proper training. This will help characterize the soil and determine whether things like aeration, pH adjustments, fertilizer and pest control are needed. Staff are trained and versed on the [New Hampshire Turf Fertilizer Law \(RSA: 431\)](#).
- **Aeration, Seeding and Fertilizer.** Aerate and fertilize lawns with slow-release, phosphorus-free fertilizers, as mandated by the New Hampshire Turf Fertilizer Law. Apply fertilizer sparingly, only when needed, and never before heavy rain. Fall is a great time to "overseed" lawns with fresh grass seed and fill blank spots that developed through the hot summer.
- **Property awareness.** Keep debris away from storm drains, catch basins, pipes, ditches and waterbodies. A quality landscaper will understand the storm drain system on site and ensure proper drain system function.
- **Properly manage stockpiles.** Cover or contain yard-waste piles so they cannot wash into drainage systems during rain.
- **Disposal.** Transport and dispose of landscape debris at approved composting or yard-waste facilities when it cannot be managed on site.



As part of the USEPA's 2017 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) in New Hampshire, the Town of Durham is required to educate residents and businesses on pollution prevention. This fact sheet is intended to fulfill permit requirements.



NEW HAMPSHIRE
STORMWATER
COALITION
COLLABORATION
FOR CLEAN WATER

Whether you are a landscaper or you hire landscapers, managing landscapes responsibly is critical — especially during fall cleanups.

During fall cleanup operations, commercial landscapers often manage large volumes of leaves and other yard debris. These materials must not be blown, swept or placed into streets, catch basins, storm drains, ditches, or toward waterbodies. Additionally, fall fertilizing efforts should comply with the New Hampshire Turf Fertilizer Law. Improper disposal of landscape debris and fertilizers can contribute to stormwater pollution and water quality violations. Do your part to protect our community:

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Impacts drainage systems on site and beyond

Fall yard waste should never block catch basins, pipes or ditches. When leaves and debris clog these systems, they can cause localized flooding and push polluted runoff into nearby waterbodies.

Yard waste dumped in or near wetlands or surface waters is against the law! In an effort to protect waterbodies and wetlands, the New Hampshire legislature passed a law that prohibits filling streams and wetlands with waste materials, including yard waste (RSA 482-A:3).

Why it matters

When leaves and yard waste wash into waterbodies, they break down and release nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. These nutrients are a natural part of healthy lakes, rivers and streams — but when too many enter at once, they throw the system off balance. Excess nutrients fuel rapid algae growth that blocks sunlight and reduces the oxygen aquatic plants and animals need to survive, leading to stressed or damaged ecosystems.



Visit the [UNH Cooperative Extension Webpage](#) for more information