

MAYOR'S COLUMN

Fall is upon us. This year, unlike in recent years past, the leaves are falling on nature's normal schedule. Two recent rain/wind storms have also caused them to fall in abundance during a concentrated period. Our Public Works employees have begun the clean up and will continue to remove leaves until December 31st.

As a reminder, leaves should be placed inside the curb line in low rows for efficient pick-up by our vacuum truck. The larger piles take more time and manpower to remove and also easily blow onto neighbors' property. This year's clean up has already proved to be difficult because gardeners continue to pile leaves in the public streets. Many of our neighboring municipalities, notably Scarsdale, impose heavy fines for this practice. This condition presents a real safety hazard by narrowing streets, creating slippery road surfaces and clogging drainage basins, exacerbating flooding conditions. Please do not mix branches or other yard waste in the leaf piles. This creates mechanical problems for our equipment and slows down the clean-up process. Branches and twigs should be tied into bundles and piled separately. We ask for your help in instructing gardeners on proper procedures so the clean-up will be safe and expeditious.

This is also the time of year to discuss any changes in the care of your property with your landscape professional. We urge you, like the Village, to opt for organic lawn care products. They are not more costly and most area landscapers have the capability if they are given enough lead time to order the proper materials. If each homeowner committed to the organic approach, we could greatly decrease the airborne carcinogens and limit the contaminants in our water run-off that go directly into our drainage systems.

Our ordinance restricting the use of gas powered leaf blowers runs from September 30th to June 1st so now you will see blowers legally being used throughout the Village. Our law is similar to ones enacted by other communities who have also addressed this issue. The use dates are a balancing of the concerns of residents with the needs of gardeners to get the lion's share of the Fall clean-up done more efficiently and freeing sidewalks and driveways of the slippery leaf cover. We welcome your thoughts as to the efficacy and language of the leaf blower legislation currently in effect.

Continuing on the lawn care topic, over the past two years, we have been encouraging residents to use brown biodegradable bags for yard waste such as grass clippings. This voluntary program provided great efficiencies for our crews and help decrease man hours and cost. I know our Superintendent of Public works would like to see this become a mandatory program going forward and the Village Board will be discussing the idea in the coming months. Bagging is not only labor and cost saving, but makes the Village much more attractive, eliminating those large piles of decomposing grass. Leaves would continue to be picked up loose by the vacuum truck and branches would be removed in the tied bundles.

The first of the year also signals the change in garbage pick-up schedules. The Monday/Thursday routes will revert to Tuesday/Friday and vice versa.

As a reminder, as we enter the winter months every owner of a vacant property and every owner, tenant, occupant or leaseholder of occupied property is required to keep

the sidewalk adjoining such property clear of snow and ice. All sidewalks in the business district must be cleared of ice and snow by 9AM and 4PM of each day, whether or not snow is still falling. All sidewalks in other districts must be cleared of snow within 12 hours of the cessation of snow falling. Ice remaining on the sidewalk after it has been cleared or forming thereafter shall, if not easily removable, be kept covered with clean ashes, sand or the like, to assure the safety of pedestrians.

The general repairs and maintenance of sidewalks are also the responsibility of all homeowners and business owners or their tenants. Kindly check that your sidewalk is free of cracks and up lifts caused by tree roots, etc. Failure to do so can result in a Village violation and fine.

Help us during these closing weeks of Fall to keep our Village safe, clean and attractive.