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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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No curbside leaf pickup in Brattleboro this fall

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TEXT BODY:

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The town of Brattleboro announced it will not be offering curbside leaf collection during the fall 2025 season. The program was discontinued during the fiscal year 2026 budget development process.

While curbside collection will no longer be available, the town encourages the community “to explore alternative, environmentally friendly methods for managing their fall leaves.”

Based on guidance from the University of Vermont Extension's Community Horticulture programs, the Windham Solid Waste Management District (WSWMD), and Brattleboro's Sustainability Coordinator, here are some ideas.

- Make mulch: Rather than raking and removing leaves, residents can pass over them with their lawnmower using the mulch setting to return nutrients to lawn soils. This option works best with a lighter layer of leaves. If a thick layer of leaves has piled up on, the area can be mowed multiple times and mulch scattered across the lawn so light can pass through.

- Plant protection: Leaf mulch can provide weed control, while helping lawns retain moisture and nutrients. Spread shredded leaves around trees and shrubs or between rows of garden beds. Apply a 3 inch to 6 inch layer of shredded leaves around the base of trees and shrubs leaving space around the trunk. In annual and perennial flower beds, a 2 inch to 3 inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal. In vegetable gardens, lay down a thick layer of leaves between rows to create an all-weather walkway.

- Compost: Those with a backyard compost system can keep leaves handy to add carbon to the compost. Shredded and slightly damp leaves work best. Alternate layers of food scraps (high in nitrogen) with tree leaves (high in carbon) to provide a great composting recipe. Leaves can also help minimize odors that attract unwanted animals. A typical mix is 1 part food scraps to 2–3 parts leaves.

Leaf mold: This is a slower composting practice in which leaves (preferably shredded, but whole leaves will work) are stored in a bin, a simple structure made from chicken wire, or a garbage bag. Ensure the container has drainage as the leaves will need to be moistened, or poke holes around the bottom of a garbage bag. The container should be kept in a cool, damp place away from direct sunlight. It will take 6 to 12 months for the leaves to break down.

45 Share: Those who don't have a green thumb can
46 contribute to a neighbor's compost pile or contact a local farmer
47 who might be interested in leaves.

48 • Transfer Station: Leaves may be composted at
49 WSWMD, located at 327 Old Ferry Road. Leaves are accepted
50 during their regular business hours. Visit the WSWMD weigh
51 station before offloading leaves. There is no fee to drop off leaves,
52 and no access sticker is required for leaf disposal. No plastic bags
53 or barrels are accepted, but composting in paper bags or certified
54 compostable bags is OK — look for the symbol on the certified
55 compostable bag. Compost clean leaves only; large branches or
56 logs are not accepted.

57 WSWMD processes compost on-site from residential and
58 commercial food scraps, leaves, wood chips, and grass clippings.
59 Compost is available to purchase spring through fall on-site. To
60 learn more about WSWMD, visit windhamsolidwaste.org.

61 UVM Extension offers a Master Gardener Helpline for
62 gardening advice at 802-656-5421. The helpline is open to
63 Vermont residents from April through October on Thursdays from
64 9 a.m. to noon.

65 A Brooks Memorial Library card allows people to borrow
66 garden equipment from the Field to Fork Tool Shed. Learn more
67 by visiting brookslibraryvt.org.

68 For more information about Brattleboro's sustainability
69 efforts, visit Brattleboro.gov/sustainability.

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