

## ***This fall, leave the leaves!***



**Leaves benefit wildlife.** Critters including songbirds, mammals and invertebrates rely on leaf litter for food, shelter and nesting material. Many moth and butterfly caterpillars overwinter in fallen leaves before emerging in spring.

**Leaves are a natural mulch and fertilizer.** Leaves suppress weeds and fertilize the soil as they break down. If you are worried about smothering grass or plants, shred the leaves so they breakdown easier. We use leaves as mulch for our school garden beds.

**Leave sticks and stems.** Dead and dying plants provide food and shelter for wildlife. Some develop fruit and seeds as a food source. Tall stalks and decaying wood provide cover for insects and birds. Small sticks and brush provide nest building materials for birds and squirrels.

For more wildlife-gardening tips, visit [www.nwf.org/nwfgarden](http://www.nwf.org/nwfgarden).

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## ***Leaf Crafts***

### **Leaf Rubbing**

Find 2-3 leaves that have just fallen. Place the leaf down on a piece of paper with the veins of the leaf facing up. Place another piece of paper over the leaf, choose a favorite color of crayon, and rub over the leaf. Repeat with multiple leaves and colors for a beautiful picture.



### **Pressed Leaves**

Collect several leaves while out on a fall walk. Place the leaves in a single layer between sheets of waxed paper and place heavy books on top. Check back 3 or so days later. You can use leaves to make all sorts of crafts.

We enjoy making leaf wreaths. Cut a hole from the center of a paper plate. Glue leaves around the plate until it is covered. Attach a string for hanging and enjoy!

