

# Composting of leaves and other scraps makes for a healthier planet

By BARBARA HALSALL  
It's Not Garbage

Fall is a favourite season for many people. If only we could keep those beautiful leaves on the trees. Unfortunately, they don't last long enough. Yesterday, in my backyard a gust of wind brought leaves raining down around me. Most of us wince at the idea of sending this good organic matter for disposal. What can we do with them after the kids have finished jumping in the piles?

No burning, that's not good for the environment. Town composting has not yet started here, although it has been working well in many municipalities. What other alternatives are there?

You can compost on your own and have the benefits in your garden next year. The Town of Halton Hills is taking applications at the Civic Center for home composters now, on a first come basis. This is really a good deal. The retail cost of these composters is \$89 to \$99. Because they were purchased wholesale and the Ministry of the Environment is picking up half the cost, residents will only have to pay \$25. The demand for the 500 available has been brisk. If the Town has sold out by the time you go to apply ask to be put on a waiting list. Purchasers agree to



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participate in follow-up studies.

If you have only a few bags of leaves and you are driving south on Trafalgar Road, you could drop them off at Scott Farms in Milton. Turn west at Britannia Road. They are on the left hand side before the school. Dump your leaves in the manure spreader.

If you have a lot of trees like one P.O.W.E.R. member who has 13, you might consider a Leaf Eater. The workings in this unit are similar to a weed eater and it can be set to chop coarse, medium or fine. It takes wet or dry but works better with dry leaves. The volume is reduced from about six bags down to one.

A mulcher/shredder takes leaves and branches up to three inches in diameter. These units are more expensive but could be shared by relatives or neighbours. They can also be rented at Rent-All. The chopped leaves can be spread as a mulch in the garden or

around plants in the fall and turned under in the spring. Some lawn mowers have a built-in mulcher or come with a mulching attachment. I have not seen one of these in operation but you might want to check it out.

Leaves that have been chopped decompose much faster. Composting works best with layers. Put in kitchen scraps, a layer of soil, a layer of leaves, etc. Let's not waste this valuable organic matter.

The better informed we are the better we can take care of our planet. Don't miss the excellent environmental series, *Race to Save the Planet*, with Meryl Streep on Channel 17. This is a 10 part series and TV course each Thursday beginning Oct. 4th at 8 p.m. Since you may have missed the first part, you might want to take the series which will be replayed two parts per night 9-11 p.m. beginning Sunday, October 7th to October 11th. Saturdays at 6 p.m. beginning

on October 13th Channel 17 will have a program called *Environment '90*. This program will include interviews with prominent environmentalists. Teachers might find these useful.

P.O.W.E.R.'s next big social event will be a Halloween Dance on October 26th. Start thinking about costume ideas. Members wishing to sell tickets should call Ruth at 853-1328 or David at 877-1780.

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# World Wildlife Fund releases first report

Charging federal, provincial and territorial governments with "dynamic inaction" in their stewardship of Canada's natural heritage, World Wildlife Fund has released the first annual progress report on its Endangered Spaces campaign. The report assesses government performance in protecting wilderness areas during the first year of the campaign.

Launched in 1989, the Endangered Spaces program is a ten-year initiative designed to ensure that each of Canada's 350 natural regions is represented by a park or other protected area. When complete, this network of wilderness reserves will constitute a template of Canada's ecological heritage.

"There has been much talk and little action on the part of the federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for protected areas during this first year of the Endangered Spaces campaign," Monte Hummel, President of the World Wildlife Fund Canada, said. "World Wildlife Fund and the 130 conservation organizations participating in the campaign are working hard to build a partnership with government to complete a national network of protected

areas by the year 2000. To date however, only the federal jurisdiction is committed to completing the National Park system by the year 2000 and that commitment has yet to be turned into positive action steps. We badly need the province and territories to commit to and implement system plans for parks and other protected areas."

While politicians may be dawdling, the report reveals that the public has moved quickly to express its support for the Endangered Spaces goals. The organizations participating in the campaign represent the large coalition ever assembled around a Canadian environmental concern. Further, more than 140,000 Canadians have signed The Canadian Wilderness Charter, the mission statement of the campaign. In addition, more than 20,000 copies of the book *Endangered Spaces: The Future for Canada's Wilderness* have been purchased.

While critical of the slow pace of governments, WWF did congratulate some jurisdictions for their decision to protect key areas during the past nine months. These include the Government of Newfoundland for its decision to create

the Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve; the federal and Quebec governments for their agreement to protect the St. Lawrence/Saguenay River estuary with its endangered beluga whales; the government of Quebec for its decision to reserve more than 3.5 million hectares of lands and waters for future parks; and Ontario for protecting Toronto's Rouge River Valley.

"These actions are commendable," said Monte Hummel, "and WWF has identified additional priority sites for protection in each jurisdiction. However, the primary focus for the coming year of the Endangered Spaces campaign will be to obtain government commitments to complete their respective networks of protected areas by the year 2000."

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