

2026 Leaf Recycling Program Frequently Asked Questions

When is the 2026 Leaf Recycling Program?

The Sanitation Department's 2026 Philly Leaf Recycling Program begins on Monday, November 2 and runs through Saturday, December 19. The program is one of several services provided by the Sanitation Department to honor the City's on-going commitment to recycling by helping to reduce the amount of materials that reach the waste stream.

What materials are being accepted in the Leaf Recycling Program?

Leaves are the only materials accepted as part of the program. Yard waste - such as brush and tree limbs - is not accepted.

Will bagged leaves be picked up?

Bagged leaves will not be picked up as recycling but trash. As an alternative, residents can drop off their bagged leaves at 15 designated locations citywide on Saturdays. Bagged leaf drop off helps to increase the amount of leaves composted while reducing mechanical and fuel resources required for collection. Bagged leaf drop-off dates:

November 7
November 21
December 5
December 12
December 19

Why are leaves being collected in biodegradable bags only?

Brown paper bags are biodegradable and can be processed for recycling along with the leaves. This reduces contamination in the recycling process and allows for significant improvement in operational efficiency.

Where can I purchase biodegradable brown paper bags?

Brown paper bags are available at major home improvement stores.

What happens during weeks with City-observed holidays?

No collection will occur on a city-observed holiday.

Will rain affect the cleaning schedule?

No. Except in cases of extreme weather conditions, bagged and mechanical collection will occur rain or shine. In the event of adverse weather conditions, residents are urged to watch for updates on television, radio, local newspapers, or by calling 311 regarding any changes in the collection schedule.

What if I see collection crews in my area ahead of schedule?

Residents should not be alarmed if any collection crews are in an area ahead of schedule. Crews will be working to eliminate problem spots when possible and will return on the scheduled collection day.

Why isn't my street part of the Mechanical Leaf Collection route?

Mechanical leaf collection boundaries were drawn to include certain geographical areas of the city based on the heavy concentration of leaves in those areas. Unfortunately, the drawing of the boundary lines sometimes separates people in the same neighborhoods. As an alternative, residents may participate in bagged leaf drop-off program at the 15 designated city-wide locations during the seven-week program.

How can I have my street included in the Leaf Collection route?

Mechanical leaf collection resources are presently at capacity. Only existing boundaries are included now. If citizens would like their block to be considered when resources become available, they are welcome to submit a written request to the Streets Commissioner.

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My area received mechanical leaf collection in previous years. Why isn't my area included on this year's schedule? or Why is my area being serviced less frequently than previous years?

Sanitation managers re-evaluate the boundaries for mechanical leaf collection service each year, based on previous amounts of materials collected and available resources. Slight adjustments are made to provide the most efficient service while maximizing the available resources.

What happens to the leaves once they are collected for recycling?

The leaves are brought to Fairmount Park for composting. Interested residents should contact Fairmount Park at 215-685-0115 to inquire about any of their current programs.

How will citizens be notified about the details of the Leaf Recycling Program?

Citizens will be notified about the program through various means of communication:

- Press releases
- Ads placed in community papers and philly.com
- Streets Department website: phila.gov/leaf-recycling
- Contact 311
- Follow Philadelphia Sanitation Department Social Media: (Facebook) [@PHLSanitation](https://www.facebook.com/PHLSanitation), (Instagram) [@phl_sanitation](https://www.instagram.com/phl_sanitation), (X) [@PhilaSanitation](https://twitter.com/PhilaSanitation)
- Nextdoor social site