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NEWS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF:

DENNIS SMITH
COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT
GREGG COUNTY

Use Leaves for Compost

Autumn is here, and with it comes the yearly chore of keeping the lawn free of fallen leaves. They should be removed from the lawn, since a heavy blanket of leaves can smother a lawn if allowed to remain. In previous years, leaves were burned or hauled to the dump to be burned or buried. Air pollution controls have made the smell of burning leaves a thing of the past. Actually, leaves are much too valuable to burn. A better procedure is to compost them, to provide a ready source of composted soil for use in preparing flower and shrub borders, potted plants, and top-dressing for the yard. The simplest method of composting leaves or other vegetable matter is to build up alternate 4- to 6-inch layers of vegetable matter with 2 to 4 inches of good garden soil. Sprinkling a commercial fertilizer on each layer will hasten decomposition. One-half pound or one cupful of 10-10-10, 10-6-4, 10-20-0, or the equivalent, per ten square feet of vegetable or organic-matter layer is sufficient. Manure, if available and free of weeds, may also be added to good advantage to the soil layer. The compost pile should be 4 to 6 feet wide, and of any desired length. The top layer should consist of soil, and the surface of the pile should slope toward the center, forming a basin to hold water. The layers of leaves should be watered thoroughly as they are spread out, and when the pile is completed, additional water should be added periodically to keep the material moist but not soggy. The compost should be turned or mixed with a garden fork or shovel every three or four months, and within six months to a year, it should be ready for use.

Dennis Smith can be contacted at the Gregg County Extension Office by e-mail at **dg-smith@tamu.edu** or telephone at: 903-236-8429.

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