

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FROM: DARIEN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION

RE: LEAF DISPOSAL IN WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES

Darien, Connecticut

July 2016

Although it seems to be convenient, lawn clippings and leaves may not be deposited in any wetlands or watercourses in the Town of Darien. Deposits of yard debris impacts and degrades wetlands over time by creating filled areas over the soils that impair the wetlands' natural functions. Wetlands act as natural sponges that help control drainage and flood waters during periods of heavy rainfall, and slowly release water which lessens the effect of droughts. The use of these areas as dumpsites also prohibits the growth of valuable plant species. Leaf material and lawn clippings, once deposited in a watercourse, such as a pond or stream, begin to decompose. This decomposition process introduces excess nutrients and depletes the oxygen levels in the waters. This is a form of pollution that negatively impacts vegetation and wildlife in the waters of Darien and waters downstream, including the Long Island Sound. Other pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides may also be contained within the leave and lawn clippings an will be released into the waters upon decomposition of the parent material. Dumping within streams, not only causes flood problems for downstream neighbors, but also contributes to the need for high cost dredging projects.

Property owners are cautioned to find proper methods of yard waste disposal or to speak with and correctly advise their yard maintenance contractor. Residents may visit the town website (www.darienct.gov) to learn about the Town's leaf pick-up schedule, which starts the first week in November.

It is illegal to discharge or deposit any material into the wetlands or watercourses of the Town pursuant to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Regulations of the Town of Darien. Such activities are defined as regulated activities under Section 2.1y of the Regulations.

Residents are requested to dispose of their lawn clippings and leaves in an environmentally safe and legal manner.

Contact Information:

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