



Assembly  
**LEAF MOULD COMPOSTER**

**Contents:**

3m Strong Netting, Zip Ties, 6 Canes

Open the mesh and form into a circle allowing about 4 mesh holes to overlap. Fix together by applying the zip ties at the top and bottom of the overlap and at intervals down the cut edges of the mesh. Secure with pea sticks woven into the mesh and driven into the ground.

Place in the chosen area preferably away from drying winds. To access mature leaf mould lift off the mesh and reuse. This product is made from very strong mesh and should last for about ten years without needing to be replaced. Because leaves are tough 'brown' organic matter they take years to decompose. They take up valuable space in the compost bin and when other ingredients have broken down into usable compost the leaves will still be recognisable. Let them rot in a container apart from the mainstream compost. Water improves the rate of decomposition so leave them open to the rain. Burning is not only environmentally unfriendly but also a waste of valuable reusable organic matter.

Using Leaf Mould

Well-decayed leaves make excellent mulch to suppress weeds and keep the surface of the soil from drying out. Dug into the soil it will improve the physical structure, which in turn makes it more fertile. It can be added to potting compost and be spread on the lawn. Some undecayed leaves can be added to volumes of grass cuttings to balance the breakdown of both and improve the texture of the resulting compost.

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## HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN LEAFMOULD.

*Autumn leaves rot down to make leaf mould - a pleasant, dark brown, crumbly material. Leaf mould is a good*

*soil improver, lawn conditioner and mulch. It can be used in seed and potting mixes too.*

**DO USE** all leaves that fall in the autumn, they will be brown and look dead

**DON'T USE** evergreen leaves - such as holly, laurel or Leylandi cypress or other conifers

### **Good things about leaf mould**

- It's easy to make
- It cuts out bonfires
- It saves using peat
- It's free

### **Good things about using leaf mould**

- It's clean and easy to handle
- It's good for the soil
- It cuts down on watering
- It can be used on any soil
- It can be used at any time of year

### **Sources of supply**

All sorts of autumn leaves can be used to make leaf mould, including plane, beech, oak

and walnut. All types will rot down, though some will take longer than others.

Collect fallen leaves from your garden, and from pavements and verges of quiet streets.

Your local council may deliver lorry loads to allotments and other suitably accessible sites. As they have to pay landfill charges for dumping them elsewhere, there should be no charge for this. Ask for parks and cemetery leaves, rather than those from roads,

which may contain unwanted contaminants.

### **Collecting them up**

Leaves can be gathered up by hand, using a lawn rake. For larger quantities, leaf hoovers are available, some of which will also shred the leaves, speeding up decay.

### **Compost or leaf mould?**

Small amounts of autumn leaves can be added to your compost heap. They make a good balancing ingredient for wet and soggy materials like grass mowings and kitchen

waste. Simply save dryish autumn leaves in a bag for use next season.

Autumn leaves are rotted down mainly by slow, cool action of fungi - rather than the faster acting bacteria that are responsible for composting. This is why autumn leaves in quantity are best recycled separately in a leaf mould heap.

### **Easy steps to making leaf mould**

1. Collect autumn leaves. All types can be mixed together.
2. Water them, if dry, to help them rot.
3. Pack leaves into a suitable container.
4. Ignore them for a year or two.
5. Use the leaf mould.

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## **Leaf mould making containers**

All that you need is a secluded corner of the garden, or a simple container, to stop the leaves blowing away.

Black plastic bags can be used. When full of leaves, make a few holes in the bag with a

fork, and tie the top loosely.

Buy or make a simple container made from plastic or wire netting with a few supporting stakes. Adjust the size to suit your requirements

## **Using Leaves and Leaf mould**

### **Newly fallen leaves**

- Winter cover for bare soil; may have to be removed in spring for sowing and planting
- Mulch for informal paths
- Make into leaf mould

### **'Young' leaf mould**

1 to 2 years old, depending on tree species. Leaves beginning to break up; easily crumbled in the hand.

- Mulch around shrubs, herbaceous, trees, vegetables
- Dig in as soil improver for sowing and planting
- Autumn top dressing for lawns
- Winter cover for bare soil

### **Well rotted leaf mould**

2 years old in most cases. Dark brown crumbly material, with no real trace of original leaves visible.

- Use as for 'young' leaf mould above
- Seed sowing mix Use leaf mould on its own, or mixed with equal parts sharp sand and garden compost
- Potting compost - Mix equal parts well rotted leaf mould sharp sand, loam and garden compost

### **Quick tip for leaves on lawns**

Run the mower over leaves on the lawn with the grass box off. The shredded leaves will soon disappear into the lawn. Or run the mower over leaves on the lawn with the grass box on. Add the chopped up mown leaves and grass to the leaf mould heap. They will be quicker to rot than whole leaves.

### **Leaves and wildlife**

Don't disturb drifts of autumn leaves under hedges and other out of the way areas.

They may be used as hibernating sites by hedgehogs and other creatures.