

# INSIDE AURORA: Burning Leaf Questions

**By Scott Johnston**

Autumn is special in Aurora.

And while there are many distinctive features of fall such as the shorter days and the crispness in the air, there's nothing that brings the season to life more than the fall colours.

Cooler nights, the breakdown of chlorophyll in the leaves, and other factors bring out the gorgeous reds, golds, oranges and yellows that we enjoy so much this time of year.

Science can tell us how the colours change, but there are a number of other burning questions around this seasonal show in Aurora that remain unanswered, such as:

Why is it that no matter how much you compact your leaves in those paper leaf bags, you're always able to compress them a little bit more?

Why doesn't the Town give you a credit on your taxes for raking up the leaves from the Town-owned boulevard trees at the front of your property?

If it's against the law to burn leaves in our municipality, why do you still catch the distinctive whiff of this combustion on the occasional fall breeze?

Why is it that no matter how long you wait, and how bare the trees are when you rake your leaves, there are always just as many on your lawn the next day?

And is waiting until your neighbour rakes their lawn, then allowing your leaves to blow over there, a viable strategy for disposing of them?

Just where does the Town put the thousands of bags of leaves that are left out each week at the end of everyone's driveways?

How much more gas would you burn in your lawnmower if you dispensed with trying to rake all your leaves and just mulched them?

And if you did, how many more times would you have to mow your lawn?

Which is more efficient: to easily rake your lawn several times as the leaves fall, or wait till they're all down and slog through them just once?

Why don't they allow students to rake people's leaves as part of their volunteer hours?\*

Is there no better sound than the crunching underfoot of freshly fallen leaves?

Why is it that no matter how many weeks the brightly coloured leaves stay on the trees, it's never long enough, from both a visual and raking standpoint?

Why is it that no matter how few trees you have on your property, or how short they are, your eaves troughs always seems to fill and clog with leaves?

Why does the first snowfall always come before you can finish raking all your leaves?

Why don't they make the tines on rakes closer together so that they can rake up maple keys?

Are compound leaves such as ash and honey locust easier to rake because they are much larger, or harder because they break down into smaller pieces?

Are leaf blowers really good at piling up leaves, or is their main benefit blowing them onto adjacent properties?

Why don't the manufacturers make paper bags with bottoms strong enough to stand up to the soggy of wet leaves?

Is there a garden tool in your garage that you use for a shorter period of time each year than your leaf rake?

Why do you never see kids jumping into piles of leaves anymore?

And finally, now that the leaves are pretty much all on the ground, are you already anxiously anticipating seeing the trees turn colour in another eleven months?

Just asking.

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\*(Editor's Note: The Aurora Historical Society has cracked this.)