

Dear Melrose Residents,

As Fall has begun (and the leaves have begun to drop), the Melrose Conservation Commission would like to remind all residents that dumping yard waste in forested areas that you do not own is illegal and has serious negative consequences to our shared natural resources. In Melrose, almost all undeveloped property is publicly-owned open space. These state-protected areas, large and small, have been set aside for the enjoyment of all current and future residents for walking, hiking, and observing local wildlife. Children especially benefit from the many lessons that can be learned by spending time in natural areas.

Dumping yard waste on our Open Space properties substantially diminishes the natural beauty of these areas and often causes serious damage to sensitive wetlands areas. Although leaves, branches, grass clippings, and other yard waste are natural materials, the act of piling them up and depositing them into or near a wetland reduces their important natural functions. Yard waste smothers and kills the existing plants, reduces wildlife habitat, may introduce invasive species, and fills natural wetland depressions which reduces their ability to contain floodwaters. Remember that wetlands are critical for flood control and once a wetland is filled, floodwater needs to go somewhere during storms and it may go in your (or your neighbor's) basement!

The visual presence of dumped materials also encourages others to dump there as well, increasing the damage to the area and creating an eyesore. Please be a good neighbor and refrain from putting any materials into or near wetlands or open space property. As wetlands and open space properties are protected by state law, residents found to be dumping yard waste into the City's open space land may be subject to a Wetlands Enforcement Order and be required to remove all dumped material and restore the area to its original condition.

Rather than dumping in open space areas, Melrose residents can bag yard waste for seasonal pick up by the Department of Public Works (DPW) or you can drop off yard waste and recyclables at the DPW Recycling Center at 72 Tremont Street. Leaves, grass and brush may be dropped off at the DPW Recycling Center on Monday-Friday from 7am-3pm and seasonally on Saturdays (April-December from 8am-3pm).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me and thank you for your cooperation.

Eric Devlin

Melrose Conservation Agent

(781)-979-4312

[conservation@cityofmelrose.org](mailto:conservation@cityofmelrose.org)