

Treeways

2016 - 5

Burning Leaves

Am I the only one for whom the smell of burning leaves brings back fond memories? I don't think so. I do know that if you have a big pile of leaves that you plan to burn you should get a burning permit. The key is safety – with lots of dry leaves around there is always the chance of wildfire so watch your fire and keep a water hose handy. Also burning moist or wet leaves creates a horrendous amount of smoke that will not endear you to your neighbors. Drier leaves and hotter fires help with the smoke issue but be aware that some people are quite sensitive to smoke and find any smoke unpleasant or even toxic. Personally I use the non-burning approach and blow the leaves into the woods to feed the worms and creepy crawlies and provide nutrients to the trees. Not as exciting as burning leaves but no smoke, no chance of wildfire, and still gets the job done.

Sunfish Lake follows the Minnesota DNR guidelines for open burning that are updated regularly. When you have your permit and you are planning a burn, it may still be too dry to actually light up your fire. It is your responsibility to do your burning in a safe and reasonable manner.

Burning permits to burn brush are required if the fire will be larger than 3' wide and 3' high so this likely includes piles of leaves and bonfires too. A burning permit **does not allow** the burning of household garbage, painted wood, paper, treated wood, railroad ties, plastic, tires, or other non-organic materials. Garbage burning is now the largest source of deadly dioxins in the United States. Burning permits are available by contacting the City Forester, Jim Naves, at 612-803-9033 for a fee of \$45.00 payable to the City.

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