

San Francisco Public Works: FYI



Don't leaf it on the sidewalk

Sweep up and compost fallen leaves to help prevent flooding

With rain frequently in the forecast, and the winter wet season under way, now is a great time to grab your brooms and sweep up the fallen leaves from the sidewalk, curbside gutters and catch basins and put them in your compost bin.

Public Works will even give residents and merchants who sign up for our Adopt-a-Street program free compost bags, brooms, gloves and other tools needed to help keep neighborhoods free of green waste, litter and graffiti.

The rainy season can mean flooding, and one of the best ways to minimize the risk is to pick up leaves. The City maintains 25,000 catch basins, which also are known as storm drains. When they clog with debris and leaves, the rainwater runoff can build up and flood nearby streets, sidewalks and properties.

On a rainy day, San Francisco's combined sewer system treats up to 575 million gallons -- more than seven times the amount on a dry day and enough to fill Candlestick Park from top to bottom.

"We at Public Works, along with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, encourage residents and our business partners to do their part to keep the streets clean and safe," said San Francisco Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru. "Not only will sweeping up leaves help prevent flooding but by putting them into the green bin, they can be diverted from the landfill and eventually turned into rich compost for local farms and gardens."

And remember, keeping the sidewalks clean is the responsibility of fronting property owners, and rubbish and leaves should never be swept into the street or catch basins.

About San Francisco Public Works: The 24/7 City agency cleans and resurfaces streets; plants and nurtures City-maintained street trees; designs, constructs and maintains City-owned facilities; inspects streets and sidewalks; builds curb ramps; eradicates graffiti; partners with neighborhoods; trains people for jobs; greens the right of way; and educates our communities.

