We found that mulching mower-deposited tree leaves, of either species, had no effect on visual quality, shoot growth, thatch accumulation, and soil pH during the three years of this study. Therefore, using mulching mowers to finely grind and deposit fallen tree leaves on turf provides an alternative tree leaf disposal method while having no effect on the health and vigor of lawn turf. However, results from a laboratory study in Wisconsin indicated that phosphorus in turf clippings and from tree leaves are likely to leach out when dried or frozen and could be part of the increase in phosphorus levels in landscape watersheds observed in late fall through spring.

We are planning to study the impact of turf clippings and tree leaves on phosphorus runoff from mixed landscapes (trees and turf).

This work was funded in part from a grant from Garden Way Inc., Troy, NY.