

Leaf heaps as small-scale structures

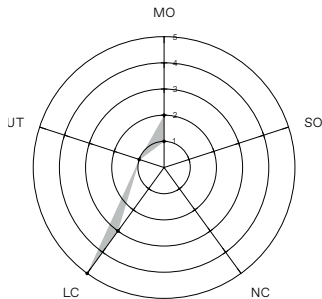
Leaf heaps provide hibernation opportunities for various animal species.



Definition

Leaf heaps are leaves piled up from trees or shrubs, which may be supplemented with branches or smaller trunks for stabilization.

Site requirements



- Moisture (MO)
- 1 Dry
 - 2 Fresh
 - 3 Moist
 - 4 Wet
 - 5 Always/part. inundated

- Soil (SO)
- 1 Raw soil
 - 2 Mineral soil (gravelly)
 - 3 Medium humus content
 - 4 Rich in humus
 - 5 Litter-rich humus (duff)

- Nutrient content (NC)
- 1 Very low
 - 2 Low
 - 3 Moderately low/rich
 - 4 Rich
 - 5 Very rich

- Light conditions (LC)
- 1 Full sun
 - 2
 - 3 Semi-shade
 - 4
 - 5 Shade

- Utilization (UT)
- 1 Passive nature experience
 - 2
 - 3 Active utilization temporarily possible
 - 4
 - 5 Active utilization possible

Principles

Fulfilling these guidelines promotes the biodiversity of this habitat type.

- Material
 - Do not use lawn cuttings
- Structure
 - Layered with branches
 - Use dry leaves
- Maintenance
 - Add new material if required
 - No interventions between November and March
- Utilization
 - No active use
- Site
 - Sheltered from wind
 - No waterlogged locations

Advanced requirements

By fulfilling these requirements, the biodiversity of this habitat type is additionally promoted.

- Structure
 - Cover using thorny branches or vines



Planning

- Adjust the time of creation to maintenance work
- Include into utilization and design concept

Implementation

- Incorporate branches into heaps
- Careful use of pruning forks to protect animals
- No use of leaf blowers
- No use of lawn clippings or garden waste

Maintenance

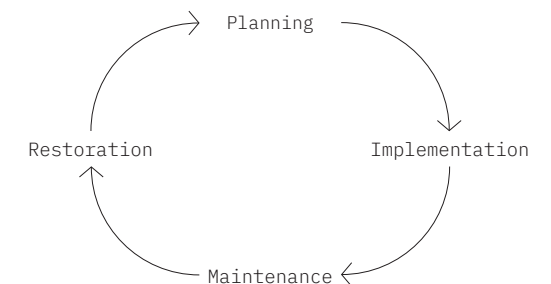
- Add new material on top
- No disturbances between November to March
- No use of leaf blowers and protection from disturbance

Restoration

- Reutilization of material where possible
- Conduct interventions between September and October

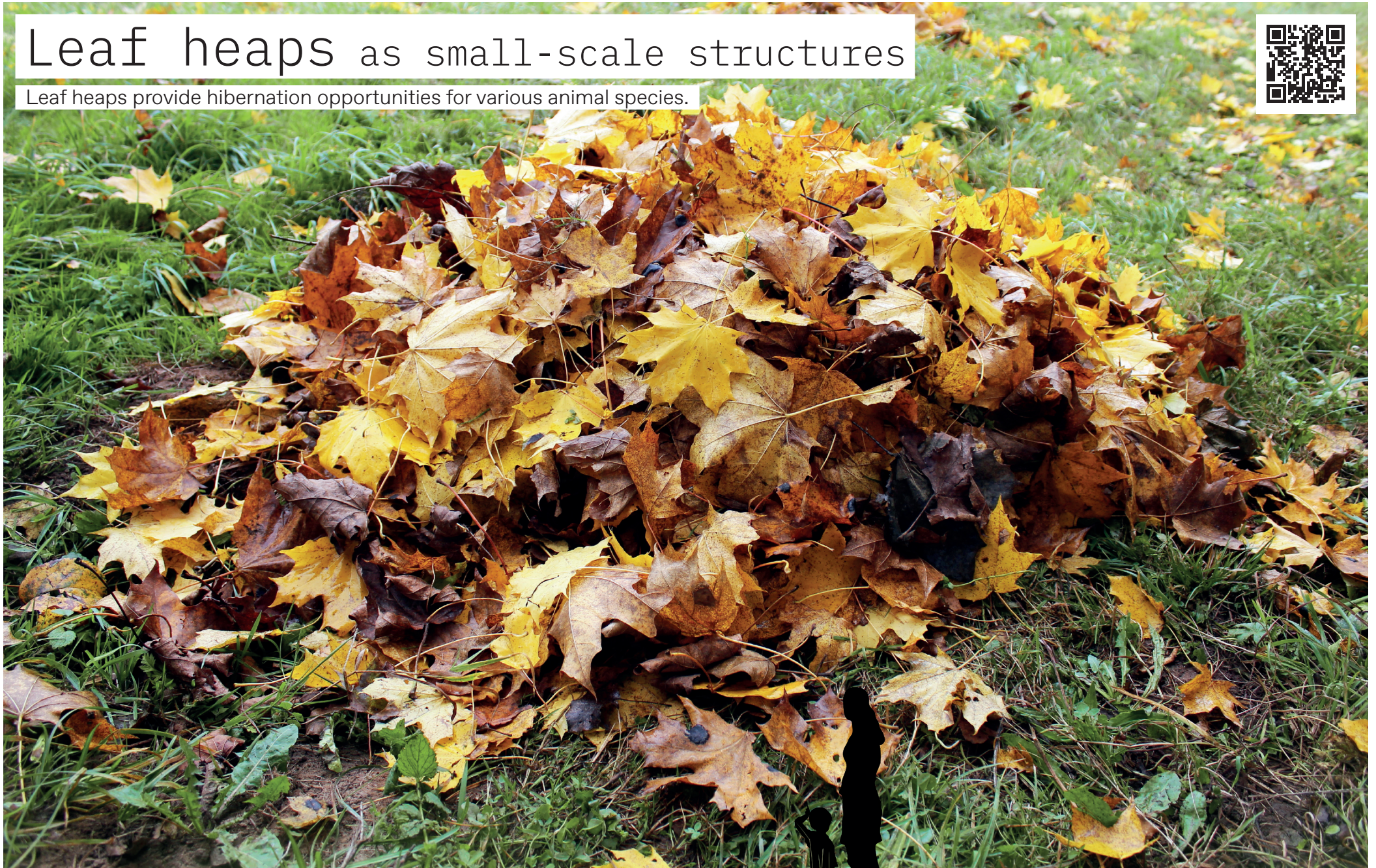
Climatic requirements

No specific requirements as long as locations are not too wet or windy.



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Leaves collected in a pile (Adobe Stock)



Build branch-leaf-pile in garden for hedgehog to hibernate (Adobe Stock)



Toad, *Bufo bufo* (Adobe Stock)



Hedgehog, *Erinaceus europaeus* (Adobe Stock)