



NOT A SINGLE DRY LEAF SHOULD BE BURNT IN INDIA

A Step-by-Step Guide

ADITI DEODHAR

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About Brown Leaf

Not a single dry leaf should be burnt in India; That is the vision

The entire Brown Leaf community works towards this vision.

With every tiny leaf that goes back to the soil, we inch towards this vision.

With every person we convince not to burn dry leaves, we inch towards this vision.

That is what Brown Leaf does, the community of determined individuals, saving the environment, leaf by leaf.

What exactly is Brown Leaf?

Simply put, Brown Leaf is the forum for the eco-friendly management of dry leaves.

MULCH, COMPOST, DONATE is our 3-fold strategy, the alternative to burning.

Do not worry, we will discuss each in detail in the later chapters.

For the time being, bear with me and believe they are the eco-friendly ways to manage dry leaves.

We wish to discuss in detail, what is a community, why a community is necessary and how one can build a community around a cause.

Let me start with my story.

How Brown Leaf happened

“There is a really large heap of dry leaves. What is your plan, exactly?”

I was caught off-guard by this question.

Our housekeeping person stood there with a concerned expression.

In the year 2012-13, I completed a Post-graduate diploma in Sustainable Natural Resource Management from a renowned institute like Ecological Society.

It opened my eyes to the world around me. Many things that had never affected me now bothered me. The burning of dry leaves was one of them.

Leaves are biodegradable. Why burn them off when they would eventually decompose? That was my thought.

We have a large tree in the backyard. Like every tree, this is a green respite in the concrete jungle around. It is home to so many birds. It is a pleasure to watch squirrels run about on their branches.

Come winter, and this green dream turns into a brown nightmare.

There are so many leaves.

We were no different. We used to get rid of those dry leaves by burning.

With my new philosophy, I decided to stop this practice in my building premises.

I requested our housekeeping lady not burn dry leaves on the premises. I suggested she make a heap of leaves and let it be.

I was so happy. Wow!! I decided something & I implemented it. Great! What was so challenging? I did it.

I got about a month to revel in this bliss till the lady returned with a big question mark.

Her concern was valid. The heap of leaves was quite large by now.

Pretty soon, the society members would have been wondering why this lady was not doing her job? Why the leaves were still there.

Okay, now I saw the problem. Just asking somebody not to burn dry leaves was not sufficient. I was expected to provide an alternative.

What was the alternative? I had no idea whatsoever.

At the same time, I could not bear that large heap of dry leaves going up in the air as the smoke.

Before I proceed with my story, here is a brief background.

I live in Pune city, in the state of Maharashtra in India. Pune is a city with a glorious history. It is called the cultural capital of Maharashtra. It is an education hub, a beautiful city nestled in the hills. It is a green city. A look at the city from any of the surrounding hills is enough to prove this point.

This greenery has a dark side, the Brown Side.

By mid-October, the leaf fall starts. The roads, the footpaths, society premises, almost every horizontal surface in sight gets covered with layers and layers of dry leaves.

What to do with all these dry leaves? That is the challenge.

The most obvious and convenient solution seems to burn them off. Or pay somebody to take away, who in turn burns it. Basically, the idea is to get rid of dry leaves by any means.

Everybody agrees burning is not a good option. It adds carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide to the environment. Both are greenhouse gases contributing to global warming. Carbon monoxide is

particularly hazardous to our health. Smoke is not a very pleasant thing to have, and especially so if you are suffering from asthma.

Then why do people keep burning leaves?

Dry leaves, as the words suggest, are well, dry. They burn down quickly. The large heap gets reduced to a handful of ash in no time.

Convenience takes precedence over the “seemingly ill effects” of burning, which are long-term. Inhaling smoke and gases will not affect us immediately. It takes some years to show the damage. Hence, there is a temporal difference in cause and effect. And that is why it is not very scary.

I wanted to end this very practice, starting with my own premises.

If not burn, what? That was the burning question, literally 😊

In my desperation for an answer, I took to social media.

I drafted a msg, stating that I had many dry leaves and I asked people what all one could do with them.

I did get some responses. One of them particularly interested me.

It was from a lady named Sujata, residing in Pune city itself. She offered to take away every leaf shed by my tree.

Wow!! That is great.

All I had to do was, pack the leaves in gunny bags. I went to my regular grocery shop and got 5 empty gunny bags. The Housekeeping lady and I together transferred the leaves from the heap into the gunny bags.

We had 5 bags ready when Sujata came the next day. She put those bags in the car dicky, thanked me. She brought me packets of home-made spice as a thank you.

And that was all. That large heap in our society premises was gone & there was eager taker for the next batch. Our problem was solved.

But all this was too interesting, just to leave at that.

All these dry leaves were a big headache for me & my society members. Whereas this lady came all the way from the other end of the city and collected those leaves.

Who does that? And why? What exactly she does with those leaves?

Curiosity got better of me & I scheduled time with Sujata for a visit to her place.

What I saw there was Wow!! Simply wow!!

Let me share her entire story.

Sujata belongs to an agricultural family. Fresh vegetables cultivated without any toxic, harmful fertilizers and pesticides is what she dreamt of when she moved to Pune city.

What is the best way to ensure this? Yes, cultivate them yourselves.

In her bungalow society, she owns a plot. She decided to convert that plot into her vegetable farm.

However, there was a challenge.

For many years, that plot lay vacant. The builder when constructing other bungalows in the society had used this plot as a dumping ground. A lot of construction debris had been dumped in that plot over time. There was virtually no soil left.

The challenge before Sujata was to create the much required organic matter. And that is where dry leaves come in. Sujata utilized dry leaves to make up for the deficiency of organic matter in the plot.

And that is why she had promised me that she would accept every leaf that my tree sheds.

However, looking at the plot, I realized my tree will not be able to satisfy the need of her garden. She needed more dry leaves. Sujata resonated. She agreed, she was constantly on the lookout for dry leaves.

Grow Your Own Food

“Grow your own food” movement has taken root in Pune. More and more people are converting their vacant terraces into family vegetable farms. After discussions with Sujata, I began chatting with these new terrace gardeners.

Dry leaves make the ideal organic matter, as it is light in weight. It is easy to carry a bag of dry leaves all the way to the terrace as opposed to soil.

They shared the same plight, the challenge of getting dry leaves.

Agreed! the dry leaves are just about everywhere for the 6 months of the year. But how can one go to the roadside and pick up the leaves? Of course, some do that. Kudos to them and their care-free attitude.

But the most people are not comfortable with that.

Additionally, dry leaves by the roadside contain a whole lot of garbage, like tobacco pouches, chips packets, and whatnot.

So, the challenge here is getting “clean” dry leaves and in a respectful manner.

With these interactions and the problem of dry leaves at my place and everywhere in the city, something started clicking. In the day-to-day busy life, there was some thought, very persistent, nagging me constantly. Though I could not articulate it.

And then something happened. My son fell ill. Don’t worry, nothing serious, a viral fever. But he made full use of it to get pampered. For the entire 3 days, I was with him, reading stories to him, watching his favorite cartoon with him.

And that turned out to be mutually beneficial. I got the break, relative calmness to bring forward that nagging thought. That brief hiatus provided me much needed relaxation to tap into my creative side.

There was something out there, quite apparent that somehow, I had missed it entirely in the hustle-bustle of daily life. I played out all the discussions that I had with the gardeners. Being a Mathematics person, I laid out both sides of the equation.

Okay, there are people like me who have a lot of dry leaves and have no idea what to do with them. On the other side, there are people like Sujata who want dry leaves but had difficulty getting them.

Sooooooo, it is classic economics. There is supply & there is demand.

Then what is the issue? These two sides are not in touch with each other.

What if I solve this problem? What if I connect these two sides?

How?

Why not create a forum? Why not create a platform to connect these two types of people?

And that is what I did.

I immediately created a Facebook page, a website using free service. I made some graphics in Microsoft Paint to communicate the concept.

Here is how it goes,

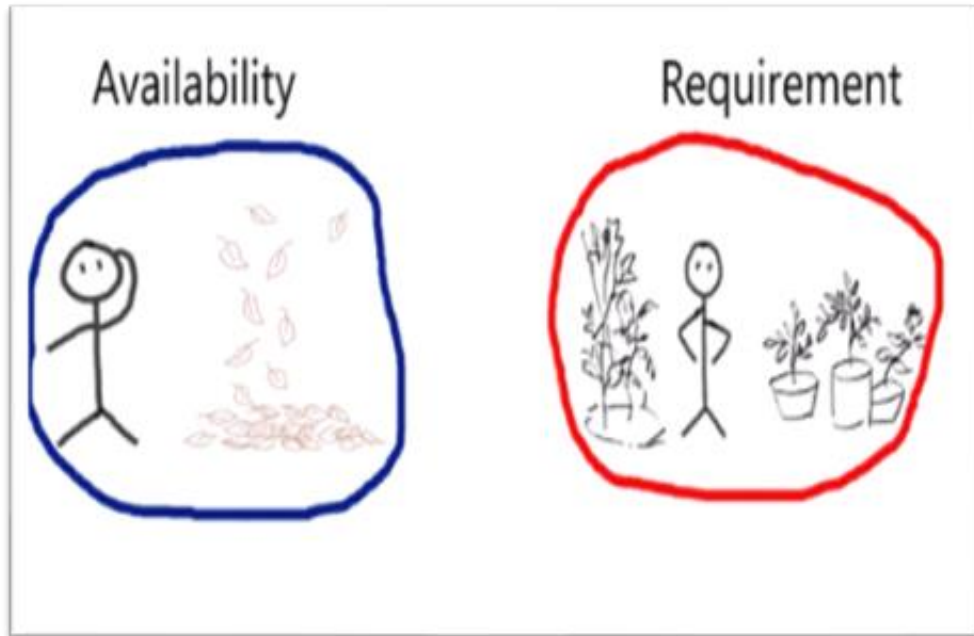
There are people who have dry leaves.



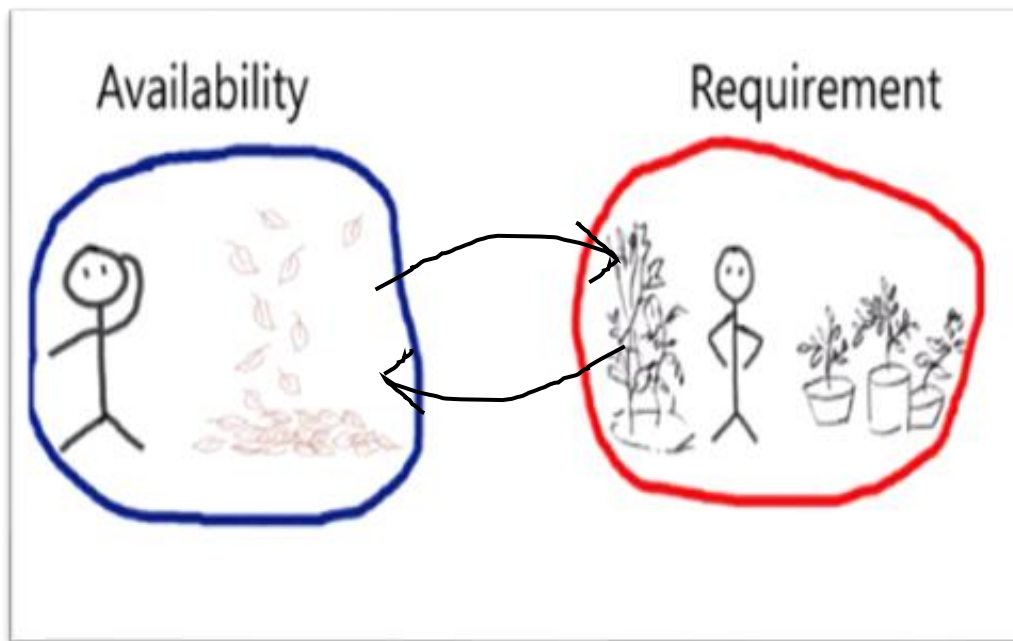
There are people who need dry leaves for their garden



That means, there is availability & there is requirement. The best part is both are in the same city.



What is needed is a connecting forum to bring together availability and requirement.



I know, the sketches are quite rudimentary. I made use of whatever skills I had. Nonetheless, it served the purpose. People instantly understood the concept.

And the tag line was; Not a single dry leaf should be burnt in the Pune city. At that time, my focus was limited to my own city. The tag line was an instant hit. It created the intended buzz. It caught people's eye.

I shared this message, along with the graphic and website URL, on all WhatsApp groups where I was a member. I received a lot and a lot of replies. That provided further validation to my idea. Quantity of replies I got was the proof that such a forum was needed.

What started with me and Sujata has now culminated into an incredibly supportive, collaborative community with members from all over India.

Why this guide

I receive queries from people across India. They inquire if we have a Brown Leaf community in their city. I can easily add them to the existing Brown Leaf group. But I am not interested in just making the group bigger.

I want this same initiative replicated in other cities. Let people create such communities and prevent the burning of dry leaves in their own city.

I ask them, “Why don’t you start the community in your city?”

There is always some hesitation on the other side. It is easier to be part of a community than starting a community on your own. Starting anything alone is scary.

I understand it. Hence, this guide. In this guide, I have narrated how I started the community, but also the detailed step-by-step process of how one can go about it.

I have shared the challenges I faced, the solutions I found.

I understand, the situation may differ, the response may vary from city to city. In my experience, human behavior remains pretty much the same wherever you go. Whatever challenge you face, I am sure you will find a solution or at least some pointers towards it in this guide.

I have included some advice, some pitfalls to watch for, some warning for possible problems and challenges. And some helpful resources, tips, and additional activities.

All this is to help you start your own community.

Let me tell you one thing. I am an introvert. Going out, talking to people is not exactly my strong point. I have tremendous stage fright. It takes me a lot of time and courage to get on the stage and talk. I am a technical person. I prefer text messages over the call and email over an actual meeting. If around 5 years back somebody had told me I would be creating and managing a community, I would have laughed.

But here I am today. The point is, if I can do it, anybody could do it.

No matter how introverted you are, No matter how shy you are, No matter how inexperienced you are, **YOU CAN START A COMMUNITY!!!**

BELIEVE ME!!!

Have I already achieved my goal? Then am I really qualified to write such a guide?

My goal is; Not a single dry leaf should be burnt in India.

Am I there? No, not yet.

Then who am I to write a guide and advise people? This question nagged me for some time. This question held me back for quite some time.

One day, while reading a book, out of nowhere, I got the answer to this disturbing question.

I don't need to have achieved my goal. In fact, better to write the guide in the phase where I am still struggling to achieve the goal; still working to reach there.

All the challenges I faced, all the problems that came my way, are still fresh in mind. I am in the perfect position to understand what a person goes through while creating a community.

Later, I may not recall the obstacles as vividly. I might not remember the difficult phase as intensely.

Hence, sharing the journey while I am still a traveler would be more useful to my fellow travelers or those wishing to start their journey.

Suggesting solutions to the problems that I recently faced, warning of the challenges lurking around the corner that I recently encountered would be more helpful now than later.

What say?

Who this guide is for?

This guide is for every person who is pained by the sight of dry leaves burning.

This guide is for every person who wishes to do something about it but does not know how to.

This guide is for every person who wants to but is scared to act.

I hope this guide will help each good-intentioned individual out there to convert those good intentions into concrete action towards the environment.

I am sure this guide will nudge you in that direction.

How to use this guide

The objective of this guide is to equip you with all the tools and techniques to start your own Brown Leaf community.

This guide is divided into the following sections,

Section 1: The Basic Concepts

Before we dive into the main topic, discussion of a few basic concepts is necessary. Let us call this a theory section. This section will discuss why trees shed leaves, what happens in natural landscape, why it is a challenge in the cities and a brief discussion about the solutions.

When you start your own community, there will be lot of queries. People wondering what leaves can be composted, why they should be doing mulching, what culture to be use for composting etc. etc.

There will be all types of doubts and queries. This section will be handy for you to answer all the basic questions that come your way.

I suggest not to skip this section. You can fast pace through it, but do not omit it entirely.

Section 2: Creating Community: Why

This section discusses the power of community. Why building community around the cause is necessary etc.

Section 3: Creating Community: How

Now, here we get into nitty-gritty of the process. This section will provide you a roadmap of creating the community. The detailed account of the steps to create the community, the common challenges and solutions, how to use technology to help you.

Some additional tips and tools are provided towards the end of the section.

Section 4: Managing Community

This section is particularly important. It will supply some very essential tips so that you enjoy the process and do not feel the burden of it.

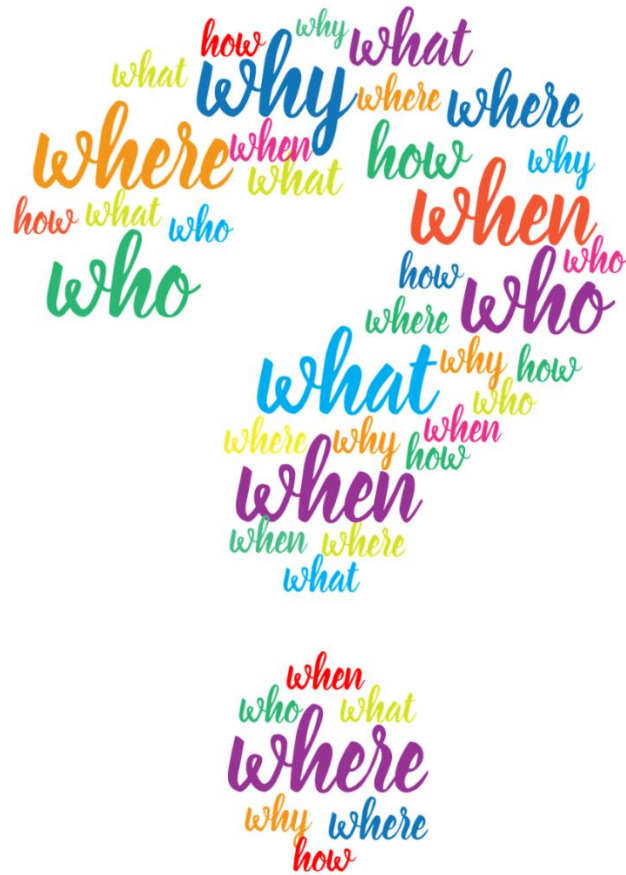
After initial excitement, sometimes managing a community can feel like WORK. This section will help you avoid some pain points and will also help you sail through the difficult phases.

I suggest, you go through the section now so that you can avoid some mistakes. Do come back to it later, whenever you feel bogged down.

Always remember, if you have any issue to share, would like to talk about your problem and seek support, we are always there.

Our collaboration extends well beyond this book.

Feel free to write to us at pune.brownleaf@gmail.com. We promise we will do our level best to help.



SECTION 1

The Basic Concepts

Section 1: The Basic Concepts

Why trees shed leaves

Let us discuss a bit of botany. Do not worry, just some simple principles, nothing complicated. And we will make it fun.

Water is absorbed by the roots of the plant. It is then distributed to all parts of the plant. This water is thrown out by the plant through the leaves. This process is called transpiration.



Leaves have tiny pores on them called stomata. Excess water is let out through these stomata in the form of water vapor. This helps trees to cool off.

Opening of stomata allows Carbon Dioxide to enter through the leaves. Carbon Dioxide is essential for trees for photosynthesis.

After winter, there is summer, the dry season. In the summer heat, soil dries off, water table drops. This is the time when it is necessary to save water. for plants (and us as well 😊)

How to hold in water, as much as possible? By not letting it go out, right? But if leaves are present, the plant will keep losing water. What could be the solution?

To get rid of the leaves!! Yes, that is what they do. They shed leaves.

Trees that lose ALL their leaves for SOME TIME in a year are called “deciduous” trees. I.e. they are completely leaf-less for that duration.

The deciduous word comes from the Latin word, Decider. It means “to drop”, “to fall away”.

As opposed to these are evergreen trees.

You will observe some trees around you are never completely leaf-less like Mango, Jamun, Jackfruit.

They do shed leaves, but not all the leaves at the same time. Hence, they appear green all the time.

And there are semi-deciduous or semi-evergreen trees. In their case, old leaves fall off and new start appearing around the same time.

Every dry leaf that falls to the ground is our focus. It does not matter whether the leaf comes from an evergreen, a semi-evergreen, or a deciduous tree.

But the trees that pose the biggest challenge are the deciduous trees because they lose all their leaves at the same time. So, they generate a huge quantity of leaf litter in a truly short duration. Our city literally gets drowned in these heaps and heaps of dry leaves.

Hence, we will discuss more deciduous trees, than any other.

However, whatever management techniques we would be discussing later, apply to all the leaves equally.

Remember we follow a strict no-discrimination policy when it comes to the leaves 😊

What happens in the natural landscape?



As we discussed earlier, it helps trees conserve water. But that is not all. Leaf-fall also helps the soil and many tiny creatures it shelters. Leaves fall and they remain there all throughout the summer.

Fallen leaves form a protective layer over the soil. The sun rays do not reach the soil. Hence, the soil can retain moisture because of the fallen leaves, even during harsh summer months.

Have you ever seen the soil by the roadside, the soil that is exposed to the sun 365/24/7? How does it look? It is hard. It is called soil compaction. Soil is compacted due to exposure to the sun. By its color, its look you can guess there is virtually no life left in it.

Contrast it with the soil we find in the forest. It is dark, moist, teeming with life. Thus, the leaf layer helps soil retain moisture.

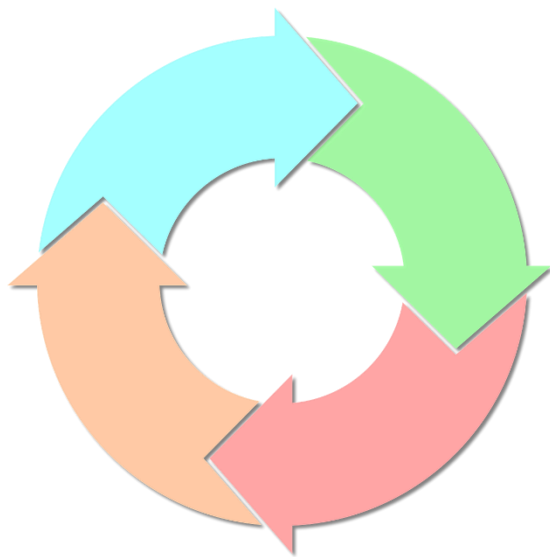
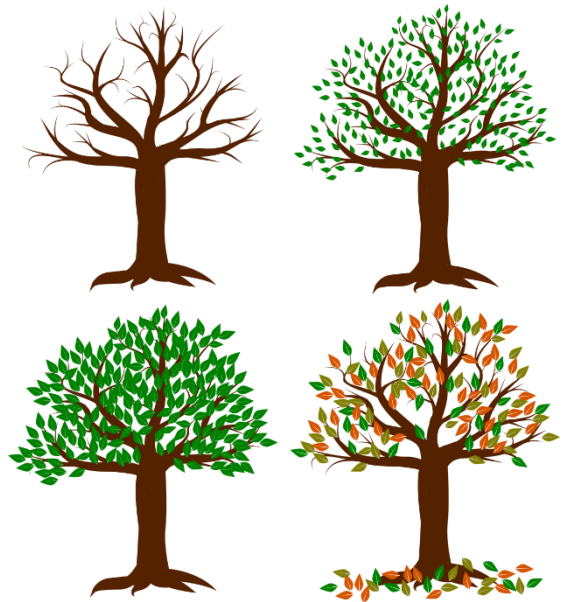
Various insects too find shelter under these leaves.

Leaves fall to the ground and they stay there until the rains arrive.

With rains, the leaves decompose, the nutrients in them are dissolved in water and returned to the soil.

These nutrients are available to the trees in the soil again, in the form they can absorb.

That is how it works in nature. Let us call it the “soil-to-soil” principle of nature. Everything comes from the soil and everything goes back to the soil.



A bit philosophical, huh? But that is how it is.

And that works.

All the processes in nature are cyclic. The output of one system serves as input to some other system.

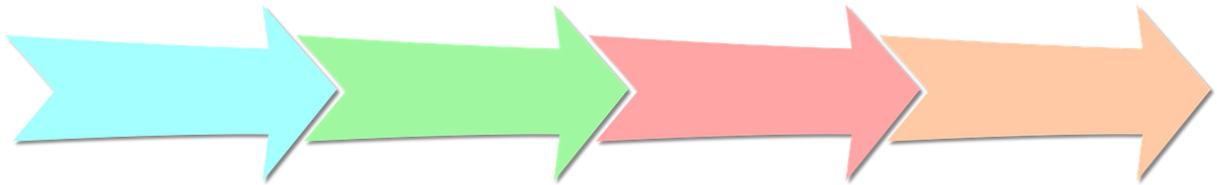
That is why there is no waste in nature.

Wait, let us emphasize it. All the processes in nature are cyclic and hence **THERE IS NO WASTE IN NATURE.**

[Why is it a challenge for us in the cities](#)

Let us come back to the cities where **THERE IS WASTE**. What happened? What changed? Why nature’s soil-to-soil principle does not work in the cities. The answer is in the design.

Our processes are no longer cyclic. They are linear.



We create something; we use it and then we throw it away. And that is the point where waste is created. Why soil-to-soil principle does not work in the cities?

First, the products that we create are not biodegradable, so they do not return to the soil.

Plastic falls in this category. It is not biodegradable. It does not decompose. Once discarded in the environment, it will be here for the next many years to come.

And then the second category, where they are biodegradable, they do not reach the soil. Example? Dry leaves.

Dry leaves decompose and return to the soil. However, in the city, we are short on 2 things, the soil, and space.

Most of the soil surfaces in the city are covered under the built infrastructure like buildings, roads, footpaths, the paver blocks.

Dry leaves do fall on the ground, but not on the soil. They fall on a hard surface, like concrete, paver blocks.

If left as it is, they do decompose, but they do not return to the soil. They end up on the hard surface as brown mushy mass, making the place seem filthy.



In absence of soil, what once was a cyclic process, now becomes linear. Remember what is at the end of the linear process?

Yes, THE WASTE. Dry leaves falling on the surface that is not the soil becomes a waste.

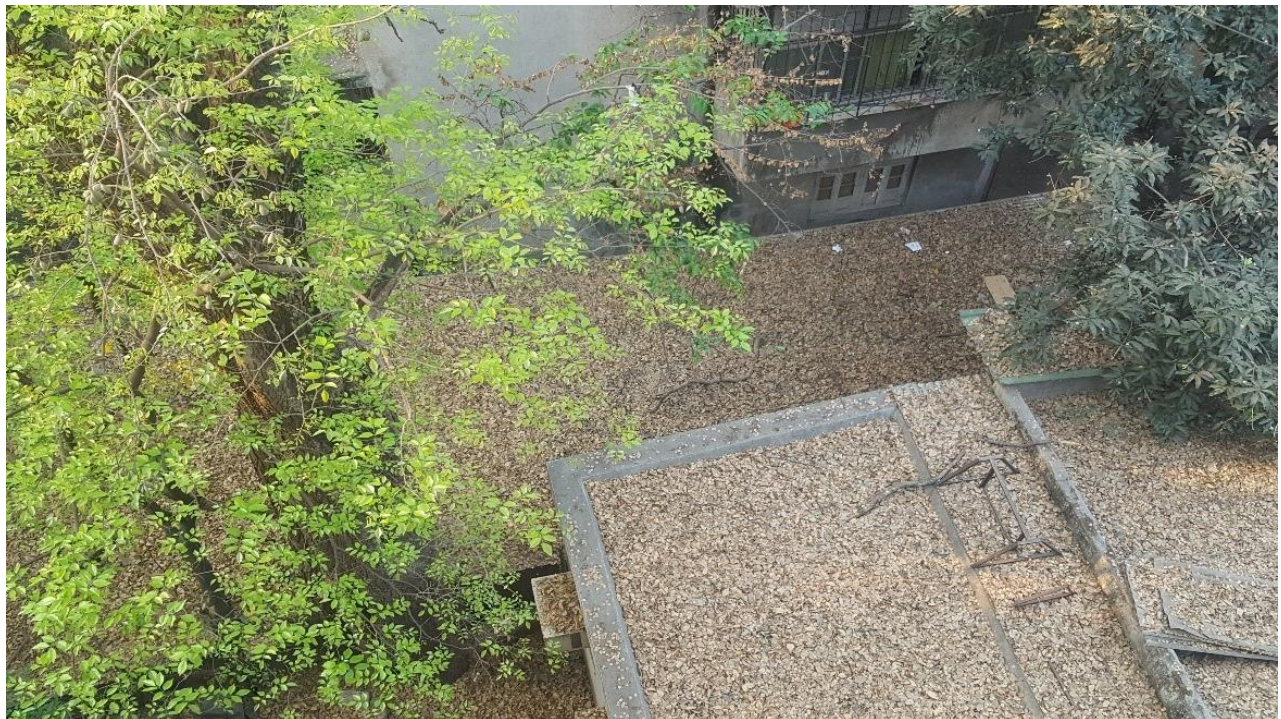
Since when is it a challenge?

About a few years back, maybe 30, 40, dry leaves were not a challenge even in the city.

All the houses typically had a pit in the backyard soil, where all the dry leaves, all the waste from the kitchen waste used to end up.

There, it used to decompose and become soil.

Then the city grew. When we ran out of space, we started growing vertically. Where there used to be soil, now we have parking lots, paver blocks. And that is why in the last few years, dry leaves are such a big challenge. We simply do not know what to do with all those dry leaves, without space and much soil to work with.



A typical scene in any city during winter

Where has all the space gone?

It is not that all the soil is engulfed by the buildings. We do have some patches of soil, here and there. But keeping dry leaves where they fall is not exactly our idea of tidy and clean. We do not want heaps of dry leaves on our premises, right?

So that is the issue!!

We do not have enough space to accommodate all the dry leaves that fall off the trees. And in whatever space is available, our aesthetics do not allow us.

What is the solution?

The obvious one seems to “get rid of them” since we do not have space to accommodate them.

How? Either dump them in the municipal waste management system along with garbage. Or burn them off.

Dry leaves, well, as you know, they are quite dry. They burn off quickly. A large heap of dry leaves becomes a handful of ash within a matter of a few minutes.

Since I have written this book, titled, Not a single dry leaf should be burnt in India, you know how I feel about burning leaves. But, yet, let us discuss why one should not dump or burn dry leaves. Very objective discussion, I promise.

Why burning dry leaves is not such a good idea

When leaves are burnt, or rather when anything is burnt, there is fire and there is smoke. It is an open fire. Smoke is inhaled by people around. Smoke is carried by winds and reaches even people quite far from the place.

The burning of dry leaves generates a large number of particulates. These particulates are carried by the wind. They can reach deep in lung tissue of people around and can cause

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Long-term respiratory problems

For people who suffer from asthma or other breathing disorder, leaf burning is very hazardous.

We do not have any control over an open fire. Fire can always spread with the wind. So, there is a risk of fire spreading to surrounding areas. It is risky for people and properties around.

Green trees, plants nearby receive damage due to flames.

And then there is global warming.

Life on earth is carbon-based. All living things are made up of carbon.

So, when any organic matter is burnt, that carbon combined with oxygen is let out in the form of carbon dioxide, CO₂. It is one of the greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.

If the leaves in the heap smother mean if they do not get enough oxygen, then Carbon monoxide, CO is released. Carbon monoxide is a dangerously hazardous gas. It also is one of the greenhouse gases contributing to global warming. Its impact on global warming is much more than Carbon dioxide.

Wait! that is not all. It gets worse. Carbon monoxide is extremely hazardous to our health. It gets absorbed in the blood, where it reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the Red Blood Cells (RBCs).

To sum up, burning of dry leaves is a
FIRE HAZARD
ENVIRONMENT HAZARD
And
HEALTH HAZARD

BUT THAT IS NOT ALL.

A tree absorbs various nutrients from the soil. Some percentage of those nutrients are present in the fallen dry leaves. When leaves are burnt, we lose those nutrients. The nutrients that would have nourished the soil get destroyed.

In all, burning off dry leaves is an entirely lose-lose situation. **We lose health, clean air & beneficial nutrients for our soils.**

[Why dry leaves should not be dumped in trash](#)

In the cities, we have our trash collected by the municipal corporation or any local governing body. Or we have those big containers in which we drop the garbage.

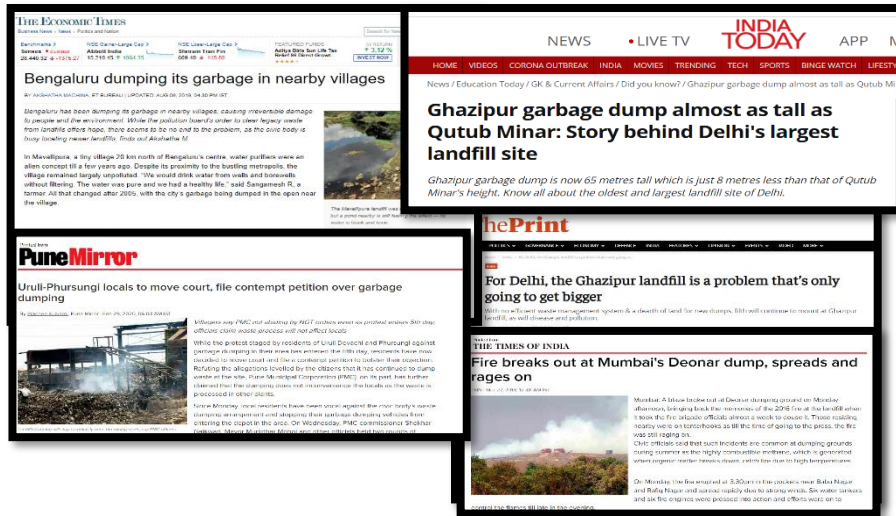
What happens then?

The majority of this collected trash is taken to the nearby dump yard. These dump yards are usually situated near the city, not in the city. We have what they call NIMBY syndrome. NIMBY stands for Not In My Backyard.

We want these dump yards out of our site and away from our nose. Because dump yards stink.

All kind of trash is deposited daily in the dump yards. The biodegradable part in it decomposes. In the large heaps of garbage, there is not much aeration. Hence, organic matter decomposes in the absence of oxygen, giving away a foul smell.

Methane also starts fires. From time to time, we witness fires in the dump yards, lasting for a few days. Dumping our trash in somebody's backyard was a bad practice, anyway. But that too would be coming to an end soon.



Why? Because we are running out of spaces for new dump yards.

If you look at the bigger picture, then going forward, managing dry leaves would be a good strategy than dumping them in the trash.

And soon, that will not be a choice. Managing our own wet waste will be mandatory, soon.

Why not start today, voluntarily? Anyway, it will be forced on us, eventually.

If not burn, then what?

Hopefully, with my continuous banter, I have already convinced you that burning dry leaves is not advisable.

(If not, I can go on talking, believe me 😊)

Let us discuss the alternatives. Better still, what are the eco-friendly alternatives?

They are quite simple, really.

We need to implement the “soil-to-soil” principle in nature & our problem is solved.

No, I am not kidding. I know, in the earlier sections, I discussed how “soil-to-soil” does not happen in the city and then discussed a lot of reasons why not.

Here, let me explain.

In the cities it will not happen EXACTLY as it happens in nature. But with some modification, we can still implement it.

Let us revise what happens in natural landscape. Leaves fall, they form a protective layer over the soil, which is beneficial to the soil and the soil insects.

When rains arrive, leaves decompose and return to the soil.

What are the components in this process that we cannot implement in the city?

- We cannot let leaves remain where they fall because we do not have space.
- We cannot for leaves to decompose till monsoon, because again we do not have space

Why not change only those components?

Here is how.

We will cover the soil with dry leaves, but not where the leaves fall. We will spread them over the soil where it is convenient for us. This is called **MULCHING**.

Instead of letting leaves where they have fallen and waiting for rains to decompose them, we will select a convenient spot and let the leaves decompose there.

And, instead of waiting for rains, we will speed up the process. I.e., we will do what the rains do, so that we do not need to wait till the monsoon. This is called **COMPOSTING**.

Mulching and composting are the recommended alternatives, since they go remarkably close to what happens in nature.

However, for some reason, it is not possible to implement them. For example, In Pune city, there are a few households, where only elderly couple resides. Due to age, and ailments, it is not possible for them to do mulching and composting. But they are determined not to burn dry leaves. Hence, for such situation, donation option is possible.

Or there are a few societies with lot of green cover. Even after mulching and composting, they have surplus leaves. Then, donation is the next best thing for them.

In Donation option as well, soil-to-soil principle is followed. Leaves from one place are used for garden at some other place. Leaves go back to the soil.

Donation option is comparatively easy to implement compared to the first two. Hence, use it as a starting point. In the section 3, we have discussed in detail about this.

Since this guide is with focus on Community Building, I will not go in detail of these options here, but there is an immensely helpful resources here for the same.

Download this guide to understand about these 3 options in details,

<https://brownleaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/How-to-manage-dry-leaves.pdf>



SECTION 2

Creating Community-Why

Why community is necessary

We live in an exceedingly complex world. Every challenge has multiple facets. No single person can provide solution.



We need whatever intelligence, whatever creative thinking that is available in the world. 2 brains are better than 1, 3 brains are better than 2 and so on. Let us call it Collective Intelligence.

We have more and more people contributing, collaborating, more are the ideas, and hence more are the chances of finding a solution.

Do not be a lone fighter

One person, all alone in the big bad world, fighting all the evils, is just a romantic idea. It works only in the stories. A lone fighter is not such a good idea in real life.

It is a recipe for frustration, for sure.

Look at the history. All the battles, all the revolutions happened that might have sparked by a single person at times. But they come to fruition through the efforts of like-minded people that supported the torchbearer.

Hence, building a community around the cause is vital.

Community provides inspiration. It provides motivation to keep going. It is a place to vent out your problems, seek support, share ideas and much more.

And with the advent of the Internet, community does not have to be people living within 5 km radius from you.

Your community members can be anywhere in the world and be there when you need.

Why not take advantage of the technology and seek like-minded people from all corners of the world? Remember, this is an opportunity that never existed before.

You are working for something bigger than yourself

You are not creating community for your personal benefit or for a personal gain.

In this case, your objective is to prevent burning of dry leaves so that our children and future generations will have a cleaner air to breathe and have health soils to grow their food.

Creating and managing community is hard work. Sometimes, there will be frustrating moments. There will be some disturbing moments.

Remembering that you and your community members are working for something bigger than yourself, will help you sail through these difficult phases.

Yes, you can start community around the cause

In the following section, we will divulge into how you can create community. If you still have any doubts, this section is for you. In case you are confident by now, feel free to skip this and jump onto section 3.

Even when we want to do something badly, there are things that stop us from going ahead. And almost 100% of the times, they are not other people and outside circumstances. They are our own doubts.

Here is the list of the most common doubts and fears.

- I am an introvert
- I am not comfortable talking to people
- I am not an expert
- I am not a born leader
- Why people would listen to me?
- I do not have any experience

Is your fear here? If not, do share with us at pune.brownleaf@gmail.com. We would like to make our list comprehensive 😊

I would like to share a quote by a dear friend of mine, Here is what he says, **“Our abilities never restrict us, our thoughts do”**.

And that is so true. As they say everything is in our head. If we think WE CAN, then WE CAN. If we think WE CAN'T, then WE CAN'T.

You are reading the guide written by the biggest introvert, who does not even like to talk on the phone. Believe me. I prefer SMS, WhatsApp messages and emails to phone calls. I like to be at home and work on my computer, at a quiet place.

Till the year 2016, I had no idea what is mulching. I had done some composting before, that is all.

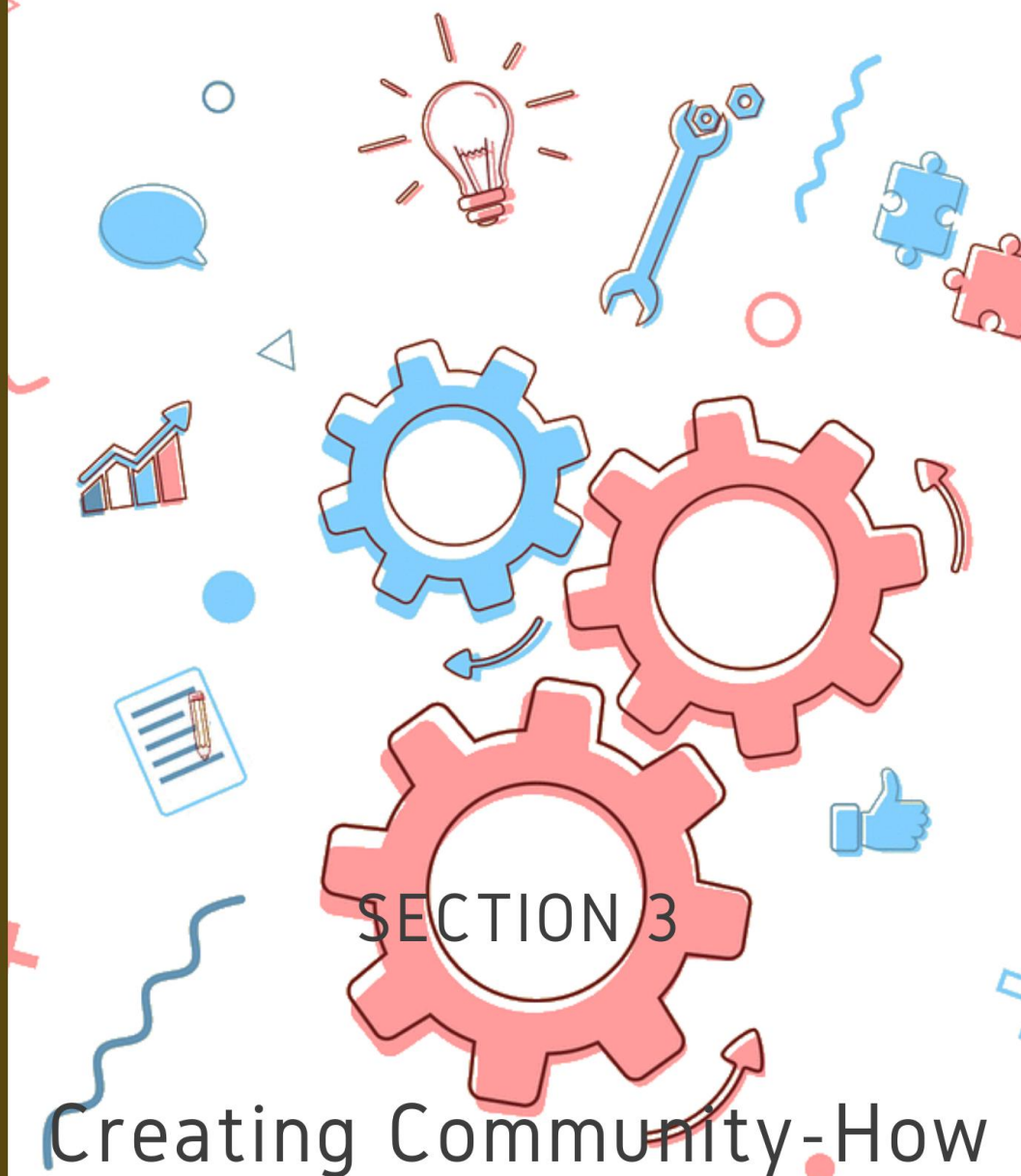
Till the year 2017, I used to freeze standing in front of people, talking about Brown Leaf. Even the thought of talking to a group of people used to scare me.

And I got over it.

Means I am still an introvert, I still do not like phone calls, I still enjoy working happily on my laptop at a quiet place.

And yet, now, I enjoy interacting with people, hold discussion sessions, arrange demo visits, exchange ideas with community members and manage an ever-growing community.

I assure you, if I can do it, so can you.



SECTION 3

Creating Community-How

Section 3: Creating Community: How

As we discussed in the earlier section, in any city, there are people who have dry leaves and there are people who want dry leaves.

Let us call people with dry leaves, the Leaf-Donors. People who want dry leaves are our Leaf-Takers.

Our philosophy is **MULCH – COMPOST -DONATE**.

MULCH and COMPOST are the recommended alternatives. However, it is not fair to expect a person who is currently burning off dry leaves to get convinced immediately and start composting. It is like expecting a baby to run before he or she walks.

What we are aiming at here is the mindset. The person who considers dry leaves is a waste is to be converted into a person who thinks they are a resource. It is a slow and gradual process. Just like in case of a baby, there are milestones in changing the mind-set.

Also, when a person is convinced, the actual action will take time.

It is like exercising. We all agree, we should do it regularly, right? How many of us do it? Very few. Because it involves commitment, it involves efforts. On the other hand, not exercising is more attractive, because it allows to have one more hour of sleep.

Similarly, even when person agrees burning leaves is wrong, there will be some time till he/ she will start mulching or composting. Simply because it requires efforts.

Also, that time differs from person to person. Maybe you are kind of a person who takes initiative, who is self-motivated. Once convinced, you act immediately. But that may not be the case with your neighbor. I repeat, mindset change is a slow and gradual process.

Then, what is the solution?

Allow people that time. Yes, start with the simplest of the 3 options. And that is “Donation”. The present tendency of people is to get rid of the dry leaves. Donation option makes that possible.

There is some work involved, of course. But it is less than first two options. Thus, for people who burn dry leaves, as a starter, suggest them leaf-donation. And then move to mulching and then composting. We will discuss these 2 conversions in details later.

Once community is active, many conversions will happen automatically.

Here is an example of how it happened in brown Leaf community in Pune.

Once the leaf-exchange started, the leaf-takers would post a photo of their produce. It was their way of saying thank you to the leaf-donor.

There used to be a photo of a cabbage, a cauliflower, strawberries, and so on. They also shared photos of their beautiful, blossoming gardens.

Dry leaves are useful, was not a theory now. Members got to see the results in the form of vegetables and fruits in the posts.

Around the same time, we began demo visits to leaf-takers' gardens on weekends. These visits received tremendous response. There were some who had started gardening and needed guidance, there were some who needed more ideas, there were some who were simply curious.

All the people got what they wanted at these visits.

The change in the mindset was first visible through the members' language.

"I have a lot of dry leaves. If there is no taker for them by weekend, I will burn them off"

Yes, that was the language initially, I am not exaggerating.

Now, the language changed. There was no longer hurry "to get rid of the leaves". Some members coined the term "Brown Gold" for the dry leaves.

There were some societies who were leaf-donors. Now they understood silliness of their actions. They were getting rid of dry leaves which were free. And instead, they were putting in money to buy compost for the society garden.

As the result of this mindset change, we lost many of our Leaf-Donors, because they started using their dry leaves for mulching and composting. Losing is not always a bad thing, what say? 😊

10 Simple steps to create your Brown Leaf community

Step 1: Build the database of leaf-donors and leaf-takers

Let us understand how to build database of leaf-donors and leaf-takers. Almost all the tools I suggest in this guide are free. Many of them you already use.

Create a WhatsApp group. Right now, you are the only member. But do not worry, soon, your group will be full of members and thriving with activity.

For the leaf-exchange to happen, you need leaf-donors and leaf-takers, both.

Once you have leaf-donors joining your group, if there are no takers for their leaves, there will be a problem.

Hence, first add leaf-takers to the group. Once you have some leaf-takers, only then start adding leaf-donors.

How to find leaf-takers?

Leaf-takers are the gardeners. The best place to find them is the garden groups in your city.

Create a post that announces start of the community and inquire about garden groups and request gardeners to join.

Here is a sample post for you to get started. Feel free to create your own or modify the same.

Hello,
My name is **{TYPE YOUR NAME}**
Do you have a terrace garden? Do you need lot of dry leaves for the garden?
How to get garbage-free dry leaves is your challenge?
I have a solution.
I have created a WhatsApp group, where there will be dry leaves exchange from the people who have dry leaves to the people who want dry leaves. This exchange is completely free.
You just need to become a group member, that is all. Here is the link to join the group **{PASTE GROUP INVITE LINK}**
Thanks!

Broadcast this message to all the contacts on your phone.

If you need any help, refer to these links,

- [How to create WhatsApp group and Invite people to join](#)
- [How to Broadcast message on WhatsApp](#)

Once you have a few Leaf-Takers, it is time to add Leaf-Donors to the group.

Here is a template for you.

Hello,
My name is **{TYPE YOUR NAME}**
Come October, and leaf fall starts. There are dry leaves everywhere. I understand, it is a huge challenge.
As you know, burning dry leaves pollutes our air, affects our health. If not burn, then what to do?
I have created a WhatsApp group where you can donate your leaves to the people who want them. This group is the forum for eco-friendly management of dry leaves.
The leaf-exchange is completely free. You just need to become a group member, that is all. Here is the link to join the group **{PASTE GROUP INVITE LINK}**
Thanks!

Soon, group will have Leaf-Donors and Leaf-Takers. To make leaf-exchange smooth, you would need to create some rules. We will discuss these rules in the next step.

Some more about database.

Now, all your members are on WhatsApp. If you plan to create a website, if you wish to start regular blogs or newsletter in the future, then you can start building your email list now.

It is not mandatory. It is completely your choice. You can keep interaction limited to the WhatsApp group or you can expand.

In case you wish the later, then here are a few guidelines. If not now, you can come back to this section when you decide to go for it.

To create database, what you need

1. Email ID
2. Microsoft Excel
3. Subscription to bulk email service like mailchimp

Apps come and go. Email is more reliable. Hence, it is vital to save your member data safely.

I suggest you open Gmail account, if you do not have it already.

Create a google form and circulate the link on your WhatsApp group. [Click here to know how to create google form.](#)

Request all the members to fill the form.

All the data filled by the members gets stored as an excel sheet on google drive. The above tutorial about Google form would provide guidance about how to access it on drive.

Now, you have all the data safely stored in Google Drive.

When in future you decide to send regular communication, you can export this excel sheet.

Step 2: Create culture for your community

For smooth functioning of the community, it is vital to set down some ground rules. It will prevent a lot of headache for you.

When members join, these rules should be shared with them so they know what to expect, how they should behave.

For a Brown Leaf community, here are some ground rules. Feel free to add or modify to suit your needs.

Rules in general

- Focus of this group is dry leaf management, mulching, composting, leaf donation, gardening. The messages should be strictly in this focus area.

- For any irrelevant message, a warning will be sent to the sender. If it happens again, the sender will be removed from the group.
- Sharing photos of garden is welcome, as it inspires others. However, be judicious about number of photos. Photos of same flower from different angle, photos of everyday blooming flowers should be avoided.
- Passing rude remarks on fellow community members is not allowed. Such behavior will not be tolerated.
- Festive messages, greetings are not allowed.
- If any political, religious post is shared on the group, the sender will be immediately removed without any warning.
- Communication should be restricted to the group. Sending personal messages to fellow community members without their explicit consent, is not allowed.
- Collecting leaves in gunny bags is Leaf-Donor's responsibility. It is responsibility of Leaf-Takers to arrange for the pickup.

Rules for Leaf-Donors

- Leaf-donors should segregate the leaves. There should not be any garbage mixed with the leaves.
- Leaf-Donors should collect the leaves in gunny bags and keep them ready.
- If any green leaves are mixed with dry leaves, it is fine.
- Lawn mowing/ grass clippings mixed with dry leaves is fine.
- Leaf-donors should drop a msg on the group in the following format

```

-----
Hello,
I have ---- no. of bags of dry leaves.
Area:
Contact Number:
Convenient hours for pickup (if any) ----- to ----
-----

```

Rules for Leaf-Takers

- Call the Leaf-Donor and arrange for the pick-up of leaves at a mutually convenient time.
- Respect the commitment given to the Leaf-Donor. In case you can't pick-up the leaves at pre-decided time, inform the leaf-donor.
- Carry empty gunny bags with you. Replace the gunny bags you collect from the Leaf-Donors. Leaf-Donors are not expected to keep buying gunny bags.
- Thank the Leaf-Donor for the leaves by sharing photo of your garden on the group from time to time.

Step 3: Create Core Team

When I created Brown Leaf community, I received tremendous encouragement and moral support from the early adopters.

When an initiative is successful, people naturally want to be part of it. But before an initiative has received any recognition, when there is not much success, there are people who join. They are the people who like the concept and actively support you even when you are still fumbling, still searching. These people are EARLY ADOPTERS.

In terms of Facebook, when your page has 1000 followers, other people would like to follow you. Who followed you? Who liked your posts? Who shared your posts? Who encouraged you even when you had mere 10 followers, ARE YOUR PEOPLE.

NEVER EVER LET THEM GO.

I am fortunate that these people supported me even when I had no idea what to do, how to proceed. I made many mistakes in the initial phases. These people provided guidance, offered advice when they felt I needed it.

I could have never done it with them. Without their encouragement, community was not possible.

Early adopters are basically leaders themselves. They do not need validation or proof from others.

Create Core Team of the early adopters to your group. Eventually, you will be able to spot such people from the group interactions. People with positive attitude, people with respect for others, people with knowledge and experience about the focus area of the group, are the core team.

With their permission, make them the Group Admins of the WhatsApp group.

Step 4: Encourage Interaction

Gardening is the logical next step to composting. What is the use of making all that compost otherwise, right?

Gardening provides us satisfaction. It provides us mental peace. These are very essential things to achieve in today's fast-paced world.

And gardening also creates more Leaf-Takers 😊

As you proceed, you will realize Leaf-Donors are more than Leaf-Takers. We currently face this challenge in our community.

Encourage members to take up gardening. Encourage them to start small. Here is an extremely helpful blog by our friend and garden expert, Reema Gopalan. <https://brownleaf.org/lets-talk-gardening/>

Encourage existing gardeners to write about their experience. Personal experiences are valuable. Feel free to use these blogs, till you have your own resources. <https://brownleaf.org/blogs/>

In the Resource section towards the end of this chapter, I have provided some infographics. Feel free to download and use them.

Step 5: Create Website

WhatsApp is an easy and convenient way to communicate. However, it is difficult to track old messages.

For composting, gardening, there will be some repeat queries. There are some common concerns, some common problems, that different members will keep asking.

At such times, a more permanent place to store such information becomes necessary.

Website is the best solution.

Create some blogs that provide basic information. For example, I have created blogs that explain the concept of Mulching, Composting and Donation, the 3 pillars of Brown Leaf community.

Request members to write about their garden, about their experience and make it available as blogs on the website.

You do not need large investment. In fact, you can start a basic website at zero cost.

I used a free website in the early days of Brown Leaf. When the interaction increased, when I realized I am enjoying writing blogs, I purchased the domain, www.brownleaf.org.

Here is how, <https://beginnersbook.com/2013/10/create-a-free-website-on-wordpress/>

Step 6: Create Facebook page

It is not mandatory, but it helps.

Through Facebook, I could reach people across India, which otherwise was not possible.

Through Facebook contacts, I recently organized webinar for an organization in Delhi, one in Bangalore, a college at Chandigarh and so on. There was no way these people would have known about Brown Leaf, if it was not for Facebook.

Facebook page is the key to reach like-minded people across India.

There is always criticism about social media. But it is just a medium. It is up to us how we use it.

You do not need to spend a lot of time for it. Facebook offers scheduling tools, i.e. you can schedule the posts for the entire week, at the start of the week.

Once you build content, creating these posts becomes easier.

In the beginning, make use of infographics at the end of this book or blogs on www.brownleaf.org. Simply acknowledge Brown Leaf, that is all we expect.

Step 7: Encourage Members to Explore

In the initial phase, members will be busy implementing mulching, composting, donation options on individual level.

Once they are successful, encourage them to do the same on large level. They can do the same for their society, for their office, for their organization, for their educational institute.

As a community leader, you can provide them confidence, support when they need it.

Step 8: Start a Community Project

Encourage members to help others prevent dry leaves burning. Approach a nearby school, nearby society and offer them help.

Lot of wonderful initiatives can happen through collaboration. Every member has different skills. Some members would be good communicators, some members would have extensive experience, some members would be active implementors.

When some member mentions wish to start such a project, as a community leader, encourage other members to help this member. Encourage them to create small team.

Step 9: Encourage members to experiment

We do not know if something works unless we try it. We live in a complex world. Things are not as predictable as they might have been in the past.

If you wish to try something, best way is to start small, assess, make corrections as required and then scale up.

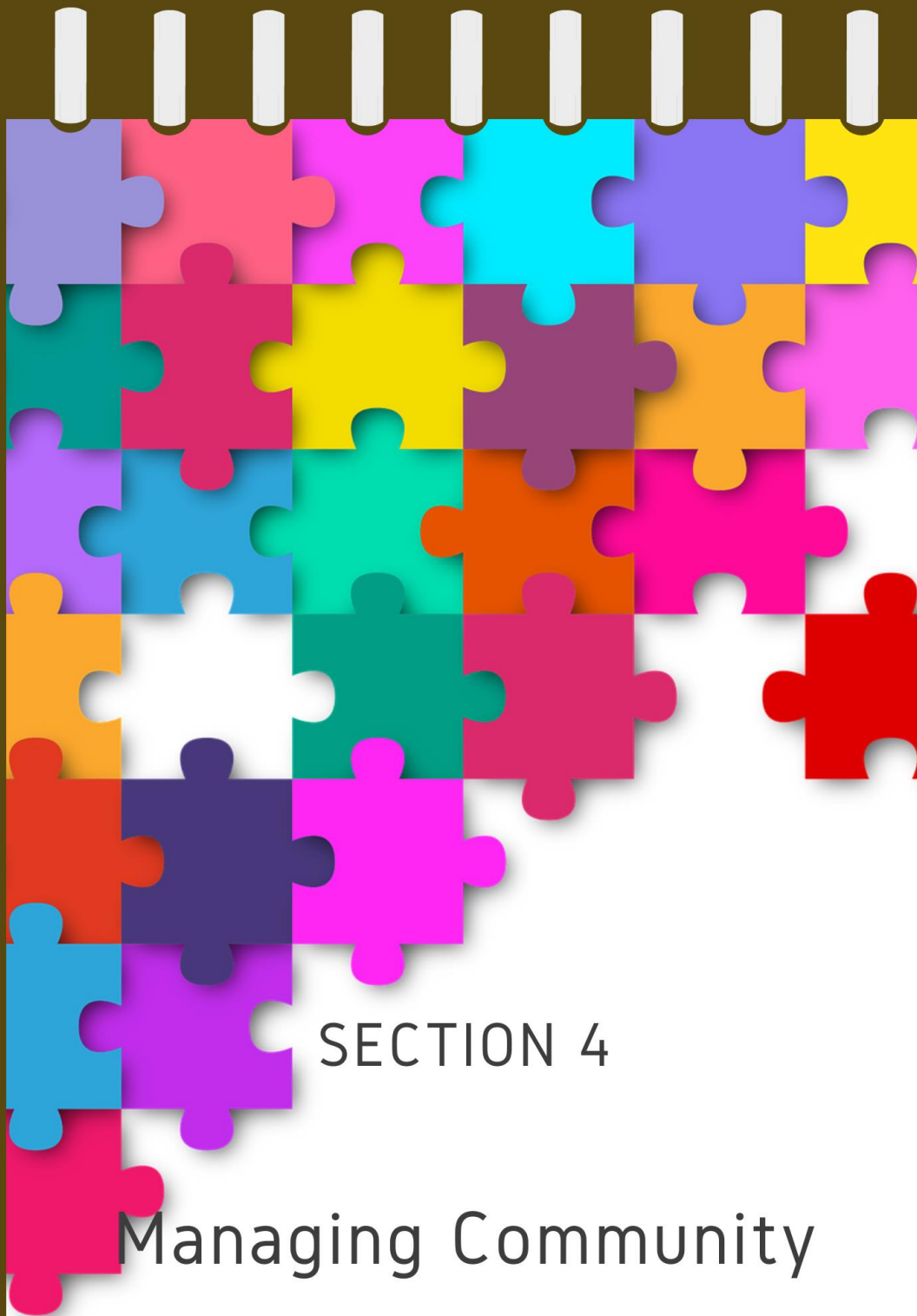
Encourage members to do that. In the next section, I have discussed success and failure. It will change your perspective and hopefully will take away fear of failure.

Step 10: Create Lateral Leadership

Create leaders in the community.

We are working for something much bigger than ourselves. Do not let the initiative die with us.

Encourage members to take initiative, lead projects. Help them build this confidence.



SECTION 4

Managing Community

Section 4: Managing Community

Look out for yourself

I will be honest with you. Creating and managing community is a lot of work. It not only takes our time, but also our energy.

Managing our personal life, professional life plus managing community can be tiresome, sometimes overwhelming.

And it will be some point of time. Always remember you are doing what you like. So, do not let the nitty-gritty of the process, destroy the fun, the feeling of fulfilment.

Solution?

Define boundaries.

Let me give you an example. In the initial days of Brown Leaf, I used to receive frantic calls from people at 7 o'clock in the morning and sometimes at 10 o'clock at night. And guess what was the emergency? They had dry leaves.

That was the time when I very curtly and firmly informed the caller that dry leaves will still be dry even if you call later or the next day and calling at this time is not acceptable.

You can take help of technology for the same, like activating Do Not Disturb on your phone, if it comes to that.

But protect yourself all the time.

Don't let negativity get you

We all feel varied emotions all throughout the day. However, there are some people who are more negative than others. These people have a way of deriving negative conclusions all the time.

Let me give you an example. There is a member in my community who always has some or other complaint. She is an active member, doing a wonderful work. She is not a bad person. But she is negative all the time.

She used to message me, every time complaining about someone's message on the group, some post. The tone of her message used to make me feel there is something terribly wrong with the community. I used to be concerned that there is some big issue.

Eventually I realized she has a way of drawing negative inferences from a simple comment.

To test out my observation, I did an experiment.

Whenever I received some negative message from this lady, I consulted my core team members. I casually asked them if everything is okay if they think anything is amiss. And when there was assurance from them, I began ignoring Miss. No-No's messages. Means, not entirely ignoring. I

used to acknowledge her message. Simply did not take any action. Because I knew action was not required.

We have talked about “creating core team” in earlier section. Here is one more reason, why you should do it.

Core Team is your Litmus paper to assess community health and well-being.

In any community, there would be about 5-10% members who are negative. Challenge is these negative members are usually the vocal ones. Means, they will keep complaining.

The rest 90% people, who are happy and content with the community are silent. Still, we get bogged down by these 10% people.

If they are complaining to you, it is fine. Because now you are equipped to deal with them. If you feel they are spreading negativity in the group, it is time to act. Send a stern warning to them, if you feel community health is at risk because of handful of members.

[For the first time in history, geography is not the limit](#)

If we were born some 100 years back, then our community building would have been heavily dictated by the geography.

Our community can have people residing in about a few km radius from us, right?

We would be communicating with people residing near our house, or within easily travelable distance.

It is no longer true.

The postal communication changed that forever. It first removed that constraint. And things have been looking up since then.

With the advent of the Internet, now we can talk to a person on the other side of the world.

[Help is always available; all you need to do is ASK](#)

It seems so obvious and so simple. Just ask for help.

But it does not come to us as naturally as we would like to believe.

People help other people for a variety of reasons. And majority of them are for non-materialistic gains.

Yes, trust me on this. At least till I present you a few examples and hopefully convince you.

“Partner in crime” is common. As Tolstoy once said, the ease with which bad people come together, the good don’t.

Everybody fights their own battle.

Everybody is out there swimming against the tide.

But if you have enough people together, you can change the tide.

Believe me, if you take first step, and yell for help, there will be enough shout backs to your yell.

All they need a validation that you really mean it. You are really doing what you say you are doing.

Nobody likes to waste their time and energy for something that may not pan out.

And once it starts, it continues.

More and more help will come your way. Eventually, even without you asking.

Don't reinvent the wheel, collaborate

If I have an idea, and you have an idea, then we each have 1 idea. If we collaborate, we each have 2 ideas. Those 2 ideas can spawn some more new ideas and it continues.

Collaboration is a powerful tool.

Do not Assume, do it and find out

The biggest obstacle is we ourselves. Our assumptions, our doubts.

When I started Brown Leaf forum, my biggest problem was my own assumptions.

What majority of people did? burn off the dry leaves

What I suggested they do? They collect the dry leaves in gunny bags.

Now let us check the difference.

Burning involves collecting dry leaves into heap and light a match. That's all.

Easy!! Takes a few minutes.

Now look at what I was expecting.

First one needs gunny bags to pack all those leaves in. That is not something every household has. One needs to go out and acquire them.

Then, pick up those leaves from the heap and put them in the bag.

I had done this, so I knew it is not easy. Rather, quite a back-breaking task it is. And then store those gunny bags for a day or two, till the leaf-taker picks them.

Overall, burning leaves off is certainly simpler task of the two.

Then why anybody would take trouble to be a leaf-donor. Wouldn't they prefer burning them and get rid of those leaves? I had moments of doubt.

But nevertheless, I gave that idea a try. And guess what, it worked. Many people were ready to take that trouble. They did not mind it. Burning was not majority of people's first choice, as I had assumed.

We will not know if something works unless we try it.

[Don't wait for the "Perfect Plan", because such a thing does not exist](#)

As Martin Luther King Jr said,

"Take the First Step in Faith, You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step".

[Have your own definition of success](#)

There are so many things in the world that need improvement. There are so many things one can do to make this world a better place.

For example, our globe is warming at an unprecedented rate.

Our waters sources are depleting.

Ozone layer needs restoring.

There is so much to do around here.

That does not mean, YOU must do each and everything.

Once you start the community, there will be calls, there will be demands to do this and that.

If you are doing THIS, people will expect you THAT as well.

[There will be some rude remarks](#)

There will be people praising for what you do. But at the same time, there will be people passing rude remarks, calling names.

I know the advice I am about to give you is quite old. This advice has been passed to us for generations. But believe me, it works. Yes, IGNORE is the word.

There is absolutely nothing you can do about these people. Ignoring them is the best thing.

And there is no safe-guarding against such people. They will appear from nowhere, will pass some negative remark when you least expect it, and most importantly when you do not deserve it.

Though, there are a few things you can do to safeguard against them, the second time around.

Yes, here are a few tips.

Whenever you come across such a person who you feel is unnecessarily critical, unnecessarily rude, BLOCK the person's number.

BLOCK them on Facebook.

BLOCK them on WhatsApp.

Do not feel bad about doing this. Whatever disturbs your peace of mind, is not worth. Keep the negative people, toxic people away for your peace of mind.

There is no such thing as failure

Success and failures are never clearly demarcated, as this is the success, and this is the failure.

Failure is always vilified in our society. And success is too overrated.

But nobody can define what amounts to success and what can be termed as failure.

The quote by Edison is plastered all over, the schools, colleges, workplaces, but it is rarely put into practice.

In my opinion, we either succeed or we gain experience.

If you do something and it does not proceed the way you thought, then you are not back to square one. You have understood what does not work. You are at a better position than you were before.

It is like climbing up a spiral staircase. We might feel we have come round, but that is not true. We are at a greater height than before; we have better view and our horizons are wide.

Identify your own strengths and weaknesses

We are more comfortable doing certain tasks. Some tasks provide us energy while some tasks tire us.

Sense the vibe, do more of what energizes you.

Some extra Resources for you

Download and use infographics in this section. Simply acknowledge www.brownleaf.org when you use it. That is all we ask.

Some useful resources I use are

- www.pixabay.com for the wonderful photos and images
- www.canva.com and www.postermyswall.com to create infographics
- Microsoft paint for quick sketches
- Microsoft word to create posters using templates from postermyswall.

There is Miss X.

She is creating a
soil-less garden
using dry leaves.

Her challenge?
Where to find
dry leaves??



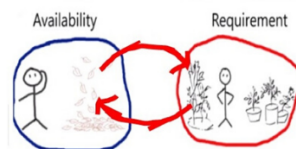
There is Madam
Y. She has 5 large
trees..

Her challenge?
What to do with
all these dry
leaves??

X and Y connect
on Brown Leaf
forum

They realise
they stay close
by. X starts
collecting dry
leaves from Y

Problem is solved
for both and so
many leaves are
saved from burning



Today, Miss X
collects dry
leaves from
madam Y and
many other
donors in her
area.

. Was that exceedingly difficult?
No!! What needed was a communication
channel
And creating such channel is easier
than you imagine.

Yes, believe me 😊



HOW TO BUILD BROWN LEAF COMMUNITY

A BLUE PRINT

Create a whatsapp group

- Find leaf-takers i.e. people who want dry leaves.
- Where to find them?
Gardening groups in your city.
- Join such a group, drop a msg there that you are starting a group for leaf-exchange and send them an invite link.

STEP 01



Find leaf-donors

- Drop a msg on all whatsapp groups, on facebook page.
- Ask them to join the group
- Now you have leaf-donors and leaf-takers both
- Explain them the leaf-exchange process
- Keep adding leaf-donors and leaf-takers to group

STEP 02

Generate Awareness

- Remember, leaf-exchange is the beginning
- Now, encourage leaf-donors to do mulching and composting
- Encourage leaf-takers to share how they do it
- Request leaf-takers to share photos of garden blossoming on dry leaves
- Remember their photos and first-hand experiences will go a long way in convincing members to take up mulching and composting

STEP 03



Towards a collaborative community

- Make early adopters, trusted members, group admins
- Arrange visits to members' garden
- Organise group meets, once a 3 months
- Encourage exchange of seeds, saplings
- Done! :-)

STEP 04

Keep the group active

- Make sure leaf-exchange remains collaborative
- If any issues emerge, sort them on priority
- Along with leaf-exchange, encourage exchange of ideas, experiences.
- Request experienced gardeners to share their expertise
- Encourage new gardeners to share their challenges and seek guidance

STEP 05

Download guide, check helpful resources at
www.brownleaf.org

TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS GARDENING TODAY



COLLECT DRY LEAVES

Collect dry leaves from your premises.

How much?

A bag of leaves is sufficient

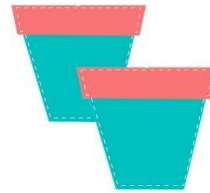
PREPARE POTS

Take 2 pots with hole at the bottom.

Place twigs/ coconut husks.

Deposit dry leaves and a handful of soil/ compost.

Go on depositing kitchen waste and dry leaves alternately.



NOW PLANT

After one and half month, plant a herb of your choice, Mint, Lemon grass, Basil, Ajwain.

Cover area around the plant with crushed dry leaves.

And that is all.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

**YOU TOOK A STEP TOWARDS
HEALTHY LIFE
&
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

WWW.BROWNLEAF.ORG





BROWN LEAF

“Not a single dry leaf should be burnt in India”

We do not burn dry leaves; We compost dry leaves

*We return nutrients to the soil so that;
our kids can eat healthy*

*We do not pollute environment so that;
our kids can breathe clean air*

www.brownleaf.org

Pit Composting

Okay, digging ditch/ pit, sounds simple..

Where?

Near a water source and where there is no risk of people falling in it 😊

What dimensions? As per your leaf quantity

Fine, it is ready, what now?

- ✓ Sprinkle cow urine
- ✓ Erect PVC pipe with holes to provide aeration
- ✓ Keep adding leaves
- ✓ Water it
 - DAILY in summer
 - Alternate days in winter
 - Not in the monsoon



Photo and method details
Courtesy:
Mr. Vivek Bapat, Pune

Then? That's it! Sit back and Relax!!

That's it? Are you sure?

Absolutely! No problem of rats/ mosquitos

Soil contains microbes, which aids composting

Note:

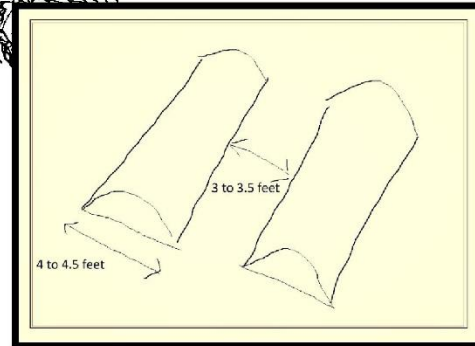
If it sounds much hustle, or if you are not interested in using the compost, then here is "Out of sight, out of mind" method for you, Dig a ditch, keep adding leaves. When leaf fall is over, just cover the ditch with soil. And Done!! Forget about it. Really, no kidding 😊
Let rains and soil do the work for you, at their own pace.



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Pile Composting



- ✓ Collect the leaves in a pile
- ✓ Add microbes
 - Soil
 - compost borrowed from somebody
 - ready culture by Inora/Daily Dump)
- ✓ Keep adding leaves
- ✓ Water DAILY
- ✓ Add microbes once a week



Construct enclosure



✓ Deposit leaves in the enclosure

✓ Add microbes

- soil
- compost borrowed from somebody
- ready culture by Inora/Daily Dump

✓ Keep adding leaves

✓ Water DAILY

✓ Add microbes once a week



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Concluding Words

Always remember these clever words by Ghalib,

में अकेला ही चला था जानिब-ए-मंज़िल मगर

लोग साथ आते गए और कारवाँ बनता गया

Creating a community is easier than you imagine. You start alone. But you will not be alone for long. It will attract like-minded people.

ALL THE BEST

Whether you already have a community, whether you are contemplating, hope this guide helped you. We would like to hear from you.

If you have any suggestions, feel free to share. Let us all together, make this guide a comprehensive resource to help others.

Find us at

- pune.brownleaf@gmail.com
- www.brownleaf.org
- <https://www.facebook.com/BrownLeafPune>