

Ways to Manage Yard Waste

What is “yard waste”?

Yard waste is leaves, grass, brush and other yard plant trimmings.

What should I do with yard waste?

- The BEST choice is to compost or chip leaves, grass, shrubs and trimmings into reusable products.
- Putting yard waste in the garbage or landfill is OK if there are no other options, but it has drawbacks.
- Burning is the LEAST healthy choice for people and the environment.

Reuse

Turning plant waste into a useful product is the best choice. Using yard waste that’s been turned into mulch or compost will help you build healthy soil. Healthy soil grows better plants with less water, fertilizer and pesticides.

Landfills

Taking your yard waste to a landfill is legal. This may be one of the few options available in some communities at this time. Only wastes that cannot be reused or recycled should be put in landfills.

While modern landfills generally protect human health and the environment, they have drawbacks. They are costly to build, run, maintain, and close. It is also difficult to find sites and get permits for them. For these reasons, the Legislature set a goal to remove all yard wastes from landfills by 2012.

Burning

Burning harms human health, the environment and property. Burning pollutes the air, causing serious health problems. The smoke from burning leaves, grass, brush, and tree needles can cause asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and lung cancer. Children, the elderly, and those with breathing problems are most harmed by poor air quality.

MORE INFORMATION

Ecology Organics Specialists

Southwest Regional Office

Chuck Matthews, 360-407-6383
or 0Hcmat461@ecy.wa.gov

Northwest Regional Office

Dawn Marie Maurer, 425-649-7192 or
1Hdmau461@ecy.wa.gov

Central Regional Office

Canming Xiao, 509-575-2842 or
2Hcxia461@ecy.wa.gov

Eastern Regional Office

Marni Solheim, 509-329-3564 or
3Hmsol461@ecy.wa.gov

Special accommodations:

If you need this publication in an alternate format, call the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Smoke particles from burning pollute our water and soil.

Backyard fires can destroy property. Most people-caused wildfires are backyard fires that got out of control.

For these reasons, the Legislature made burning illegal in most populated parts of the state. Outdoor burning was banned in all urban growth areas in the state in 2007. "Urban growth area" is a term used by cities and counties to define where home and business development is allowed.

Best choices for the future

We can all help protect the environment and the health of our families and communities by thinking about how we manage our yard wastes:

- Find and use the best choices offered in your area. To find out what is available in your area, visit http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/outdoor_woodsmoke/Recycling/AQSolidwaste_Mapbe.pdf or call 1-800-RECYCLE.
- At home, turn yard waste and food scraps into rich nutrients for plants by composting. Compost builds healthy soil and reduces fertilizer, pesticide and water use. Home composting also saves money on garbage disposal costs.
- Look into community-wide chipping programs. Chipping yard waste creates the raw materials for compost, mulch and fuel. These programs create jobs and help fill demand for compost from agencies, businesses and households.

Financial assistance for communities

Grant programs are offered to help communities start up alternatives to burning yard waste.

Ecology Coordinated Prevention Grants:

- **Solid Waste Implementation Grants** funded 23 community yard waste management projects in 2007 with more than \$2 million. Applications have been received in mid-2008 for more projects. Applications for the 2010-2011 grant period are due September/October 2009.
- **Solid Waste Enforcement Grants** fund local health departments to inspect and permit compost facilities and enforce against illegal dumping.

Public Participation Grants:

- **Pollution Prevention Education** funds non-profits and citizen groups to promote pollution prevention education and encourage waste reduction efforts.

For information about Ecology grant programs, visit:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/grants/>

Ecology Air Quality Contacts

Eastern Regional Office:

Call 509-329-3400 and ask for the burn team member on duty.

Central Regional Office:

Call 509-575-2490 and ask to speak with someone on the Smoke Management Team.

Ecology Coordinated Prevention Grant Officers

Southwest Regional Office

Mike Drumright, 360-407-6397 or mdru461@ecy.wa.gov

Tami Morgan-Ramsey, 360-407-6612 or tmor461@ecy.wa.gov

Northwest Regional Office

Taisa Welhasch, 425-649-7266 or twel461@ecy.wa.gov

Diana Wadley, 425-649-7056 or dwad461@ecy.wa.gov

Central Regional Office

Maureen McCormick, 509-575-2782 or maum461@ecy.wa.gov

Eastern Regional Office

Nancy Lucas, 509-329-3432 or nluc461@ecy.wa.gov

Ecology Public Participation Grant Officers

Headquarters

Blake Nelson, 360-407-6044 or bnel461@ecy.wa.gov

Jason Alberich, 360-407-6061 or jalb461@ecy.wa.gov