

# LANDSCAPING WASTE REDUCTION



## Thurston County Solid Waste

Waste reduction, the combination of waste prevention and recycling efforts, makes good financial sense. In addition to financial advantages, waste prevention benefits the environment, benefits society, and your company establishes itself as a good community citizen, providing immeasurable, lasting rewards.

# Landscaping Waste Reduction

## TIPS FROM THURSTON COUNTY SOLID WASTE

**Waste reduction begins by understanding what is being purchased, how goods are used, and then is put to use by finding ways to eliminate, reduce, reuse, and recycle materials. A good strategy is to target the largest components in the waste stream, and implement the easy waste reduction steps first. Below are some ideas to help you identify waste reduction opportunities at your business.**

### WASTE PREVENTION

- Compost all organic waste.
- Incorporate waste reduction into the planning process for special projects. Minimize discards from construction and demolition, plan to reuse materials; and provide extra container capacity for recycling.
- Consider compost or other natural alternatives to fertilizers.
- Consider using natural alternatives to synthetic pesticides.
- Reuse plant containers.
- Use plants that require less pruning, and use native plants whenever possible.
- To avoid trimming, choose plants that fit into the space available.
- When updating or developing a landscape design choose slow-growing species and evergreens to reduce the water usage and to reduce the production of plant debris.
- Using both winter and summer perennials can give year-round color without the cost and waste of replacing annual plants.
- Design landscape based on anticipated use (turf vs. shrubbery).
- If use turf, choose dwarf or other slow growing varieties that need less mowing and require less water.

### RECYCLING

- Purchase plant containers that are recyclable or compostable.

- Set up a recycling program for your employees, and encourage them to participate.

## COMPOSTING

- Contact your waste hauler about collection service for yard debris and trimmings, food scraps, and food-solid paper that can be commercially composted.
- Incorporate “grasscycling” into your lawn care. Leaving grass clippings on a lawn can significantly reduce the waste volume while conserving solid nutrients and saving fertilizer costs. Use a mulching mower to cut grass into smaller pieces, thereby allowing the clippings to decompose faster. Regular mowers can be retrofitted with mulching blades to further cut new equipment costs.
- Use compost as a topsoil amendment.
- Chipping wood and other ground debris will provide mulch used for weed suppression and moisture conservation around interior plants and landscaped trees and shrubs.
- Contact Thurston County Solid Waste to find out about drop-off options for your yard debris.

## OUTREACH

### Internal

- Keep employees informed and involved – provide regular updates to employees and management about waste reduction efforts. Everyone likes to hear a good word, and employees need to know that their commitments help achieve program goals. Positive communication and employee recognition (via newsletters, email announcements, recognition events) are critical to long-term success of waste reduction programs.
- Allow people involved with your business a chance to suggest ways to reduce waste. Consider operating a suggestion system that offers recognition for good waste reduction ideas.
- Have an annual employee training workshop to keep employees informed about reuse and recycling policies and procedures.
- Train new employees. Let them know they are expected to use resources carefully and to fully participate in waste reduction programs. Explain how to prevent waste and how to recycle materials.

### External

- Let the public know about your waste reduction efforts. Send news releases about your efforts to local papers, and trade and environmental publications.
- Join the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WasteWise program. The WasteWise program is a free program open to businesses, schools, local governments, and non-profit organizations of all sizes and from all industry sectors. WasteWise helps to meet goals to reduce and recycle municipal solid waste and selected industrial wastes. By participating in WasteWise your business can:
  - Reduce purchasing and disposal costs.
  - Access a toll-free helpline for technical assistance.
  - Receive an Annual Climate Profile describing greenhouse gas reduction.
  - Obtain public recognition in WasteWise publications, case studies, and meetings.
  - Network in member and regional forums.
  - Receive WasteWise Awards that recognize outstanding achievements.
  - Acquire outreach and educational materials.

**For more waste reduction ideas and assistance visit the “Business Waste Reduction” link of [www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org](http://www.ThurstonSolidWaste.org) or call (360) 867-2491.**