

WHAT TO DO WITH YARD WASTE



Keep It At Home



Compost leaves and grass in your own backyard
– it's great for your lawn and gardens!

Leave It On The Lawn!

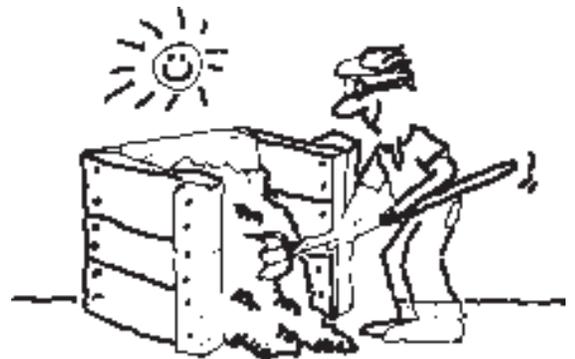
Mulch your grass clippings into the lawn and you'll water and fertilize less. Did you know that grass clippings are about 90% water? Mow when the lawn is 3-4", cutting it down to 2 to 2.5". Mow when the grass is dry and keep the mower blade sharp.

Mow over leaves to create smaller pieces that will decompose more quickly.

Compost It!

Create a compost pile, make your own compost bin, or buy a bin from a local garden supplier.

Add organics from your yard, including grass, leaves, and brush, and even fruit and vegetable scraps from your kitchen.



Be sure you include more "browns" (leaves and brush) than "greens" (grass, produce waste).

Check the moisture and temperature of your pile regularly. Compost needs to be moist and aerated so turn the pile and water when it seems dry.



Incorporate leaves into your compost pile with a final fall turning to help balance your pile's chemistry if you've been adding a lot of green waste over the summer.

Cover your freshly turned pile with a blanket of leaves to keep the pile moist and warm through the winter.

Be Bear Aware! Food scraps can attract bears and other wildlife if not handled properly.



Rethink Your Yard



Shrink your lawn -- Grass is high maintenance. By adding ground cover, stones, and low-maintenance plants, you'll reduce the need for mowing, watering and fertilizer.



Don't force it -- Make sure plants are suited to the space. Shady areas need shade-tolerant plants. Dry areas need drought-tolerant plants.

Don't overwater -- Water longer but less often to ensure healthy grass roots.

Q: How long should I water my lawn?

A: Scatter tuna cans or other small straight-sided containers on your lawn and turn on your sprinklers. Check the time. When most of the cans have one inch of water in them, turn off the sprinklers and check how long the water ran. This is how long you should run your sprinklers weekly to keep your lawn green.

For more tips, download this great King County, WA, Natural Yard Care Guide at http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/naturalyardcare/documents/Five_easy_steps.pdf

Composting Resources

www.aswcd.org (research library)

Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District provides information about home composting.

www.goodearthgardenschool.com

A Palmer, AK-based website providing a wide range of home composting instructions, tips and tools specific to our harsh climate.

www.composting101.com

A comprehensive tutorial and list of products for home composting.

www.earthmachine.com

Information about the Earth Machine brand composter. This is the composter made available for a discount to Anchorage residents through local sales.

www.muni.org/sws

343-6250

