

Organics Management

What are organics?

Organics in the waste stream are the biodegradable portions. To you and me, that usually means food and yard waste. It also technically includes paper and wood, as well as animal manure. Anchorage's options for managing organics have increased over the past few years and continue to develop.

ORGANICS MANAGEMENT AROUND TOWN

Drop-off locations for organic materials – see chart on page 6 for specifics

- EverGreen Nursery, 12580 Old Seward Highway, Anchorage, 344-2588. Winter hours – Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm. Summer schedule will start in May. Check <http://alaskaevergreen.com> for summer drop-off schedule.
- Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District (ASWCD) Wood Lot, 677-SOIL. Scheduled to open May 1, 2012. Check www.aswcd.org/woodlot.html for this year's location, days, and hours.
- Municipal Wood Lots, Eagle River (at the Anchorage Regional Landfill just off Glenn Highway at the Hiland Rd. exit) & Girdwood (at the Industrial Park on Ruane Road en route to the transfer station), 267-4980. Check www.muni.org/Departments/Fire/Wildfire/Pages/WoodLots.aspx for opening dates.
- Country Garden Farms. Check www.countrygardenfarms.com for Anchorage drop-off location and opening date.

OTHER ORGANICS INITIATIVES

Alaska Green Waste Solutions (subsidiary of Alaska Waste), 6031 Rosewood Street, Anchorage 563-3717, www.alaskawaste.com

- Operates an in-vessel composting program for commercial food waste from local grocery stores and horse manure from local horse owners. The program is diverting about 400 tons of organics from the landfill each year.

Green Earth Landworks, 5440 B Street, Anchorage, 243-7892
www.greeneearthalaska.com

- Makes compost socks for erosion-control projects, and landscapes using compost from Alaska Waste composting project. Products are sold to general contractors for private and government construction and road projects.

Central Recycling Services, 2400 Railroad Ave., Anchorage, 248-7400,
www.centralrecyclingservices.com

- Along with accepting construction and demolition debris from contractors, CRS also accepts contractor-generated organic wastes like brush, logs, and tree stumps. Residential material is not accepted at this time.

Country Garden Farms, 1201 S. Grover Lane, Palmer, 344-2088,
www.countrygardenfarms.com

- Provides a manure exchange program. Purchase a rack and bag system for \$250 and collect horse manure and bedding in the one-cubic-yard bags. Call for a pick-up when bags are full for \$40/bag. All waste is trucked to the farm's Palmer location where it is composted and used on fields.

Susitna Organics, 24520 W. Holstein Ave., Wasilla, AK, 907-841-9426,
www.susitnaorganics.com

- Offers collection for horse manure and bedding. Susitna Organics also bags and sells compost at several Anchorage locations.

KEEPING IT AT HOME

Keeping organics at home is the preferred way to manage them. It keeps your trash bill down, reduces driving, and benefits your yard and garden.

- **Leave it on the lawn** – This goes for both leaves and grass. You can use a mulching lawn mower to make the job easier or just mow frequently enough so that you're cutting just one to two inches off. Then leave it all right there! The grass and leaf clippings will help fertilize the lawn and reduce the need to water.
- **Build a compost bin** – Lots of plans and ideas are available online. Use old pallets, chicken wire, used barrels, scrap wood and more. Or you can just make a pile.
- **Buy a compost bin** – If you're not handy, check local garden and home stores for a variety of bins.
- **Get a worm bin** – These are great for kitchen scraps and are accessible year round.
- **Alter your landscaping** – Use native plants, groundcover, stones, etc. instead of grass to reduce grass waste and water use.



Gas-to-Energy at the Anchorage Regional Landfill

If your organic waste does go to the landfill, it will still go to a good use – fueling our local military facilities. Grass and manure break down very quickly in a landfill compared to other materials. The by-product is a gas mix of about half methane and half carbon dioxide. This gas mixture will soon be routed into several large generating units where it will be combusted to generate electricity for Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER). The generators will be able to switch from landfill gas to natural gas if necessary to maintain power even if supplies fluctuate.

Currently, the landfill gas is burned off in flares as required by law. With this project, the gas will provide half the electrical power needed at JBER. The project will begin test operations this year and will be fully operational in 2013. Solid Waste Services will own the gas processing system; Doyon Utilities will operate the system, as well as own and operate the power generation plant. The entire project will generate revenue from a waste product, allowing SWS to offset operating costs. At the same time, JBER receives power from a stable and close supply.