

# Anchorage to Zero Waste:

## Your Guide to Zero Waste in Anchorage

Municipality of Anchorage Solid Waste Services  
1111 E. 56th Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99518

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANCHORAGE, AK  
PERMIT #456

## ORGANICS AT HOME

The best and least expensive way to manage your organic waste is to do it at home. A few changes to your yard maintenance habits, and maybe getting a compost bin, will reduce your trash bill and improve your yard and garden.

### Lawn Maintenance

The grass and leaves you typically remove from your lawn can actually benefit your lawn if you properly manage them. Finely chop both grass and leaves with a mulching mower or just mow frequently enough so you're only cutting off an inch or so of grass. The grass and leaf clippings help fertilize the lawn and reduce the need to water. For tips on greening your yard, visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/wastes/conserve/tools/greenscapes/owners.htm>.

### Alternatives to a Lawn

Using native plants, groundcover, or stones instead of grass will reduce the need to maintain an energy-intensive lawn. Consider building a rain garden to reduce your lawn and help reduce runoff. Visit [www.AnchorageRainGardens.com](http://www.AnchorageRainGardens.com) for instructions and assistance.

### Backyard Composting

Buy or build a compost bin that works for your yard. Read "Composting 101" at <http://www.aswcd.org/archives.html> for information about how to compost and "Composting in Alaska" at <http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/soils/#compost> to learn about different types of bins.

### Vermiculture

Vermiculture is the practice of using worms to break down organic wastes, including food scraps, animal manures, and even paper products, to create soil-like "castings" that can enrich your yard or garden. An average worm bin can process a pound or two of kitchen waste per week, plus an additional pound or more of paper products (cardboard, junk mail, newspaper etc.). While that may not seem like a huge amount, if just 100 families are vermicomposting, about 15,600 pounds of organic material will be diverted from our landfill. To learn more about vermiculture in Alaska, visit [www.wormsandstuff.com](http://www.wormsandstuff.com). This Chugiak-based business sells worm-composting systems, with or without red wiggler worms; offers workshops to build your own system; and offers school or group presentations.



### More Gardening & Composting Classes & Resources

#### Alaska Botanical Garden

[www.alaskabg.org](http://www.alaskabg.org)

Classes, events, and tours

#### Alaska Community Action on Toxics

[www.akaction.org](http://www.akaction.org)

Gardening and composting workshops

#### Alaska Permaculture

<http://akpermaculture.ning.com>

Holistic, ecology-based garden design

#### Cooperative Extension Service

[www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/districts/anchorage/)

Publications and Master Gardener classes

#### Good Earth Garden School

<http://ellenvandevisse.com>

Organic gardening, composting, vermicomposting