

YARD WASTE ??? **NOT NECESSARILY!**



Yard waste includes grass clippings, leaves, branches and twigs, shrubbery trimmings, Christmas trees, pine needles, and wood ash. Some yard waste can be reduced by simply leaving it. For example, when cutting your lawn, set your mower blade to 3 inches and mow grass when it is 4-5 inches tall and don't bag the clippings.

Grass clippings are about 80% water so they dry out very quickly and disappear into the lawn. Fertilize less since the clippings decay naturally on the lawn and contain 20-30% protein, 4% nitrogen, 2% phosphorus so they act like a time-release fertilizer when they are returned regularly to the soil. Grass clippings form organic humus that helps hold water while keeping the soil loose and aerated. Leaves and grass clippings provide food, even moisture distribution, improve soil structure and promote new plant growth in flower beds and gardens as well.

In planning your lawn and garden, using source reduction techniques will help you create a yard that produces less waste. For example, plant ground covers instead of grass, and evergreens instead of deciduous trees that drop their leaves.

Another use for certain yard waste is composting. For information on how to start composting, check out the information on this website by clicking on [Start Composting](#).

Grass, leaves and other wastes from lawns and backyard gardens account for an estimated 18% of the annual municipal waste stream. During the summer, grass can comprise of up to 50% of municipal waste. Leaf waste can account for as much as 60-80% in the fall.

Think about doing your part to save landfill space and return this valuable "waste" back to the earth.