

Checklist for Subscribing to Special Yard Waste Collection

If you subscribed to the separate grass and leaf collection through your garbage hauler last year, you will automatically be subscribed when leaf collection begins this fall. Here's a checklist to make sure you are prepared for the separate yard waste collection.

- Secure proper container for grass clippings and leaves. Remember, any waste container you provide, should not be larger than 32 gallons and have a tight fitting lid. Your refuse hauler may provide a yard waste, 90-gallon cart for a small fee. No plastic bags can be used for grass and leaves.
- Make sure that your yard waste container is clean. Any household waste contaminates

the compost and causes problems at the compost facility. Haulers can be fined up to \$50 if contaminants are found in the yard waste. This cost may be passed on to the customer.

- Bundle brush in four to five foot lengths.
- If you are new in the neighborhood or are unsure if you have subscribed to the special yard waste collection, contact your refuse hauler.

Frequently Asked Questions

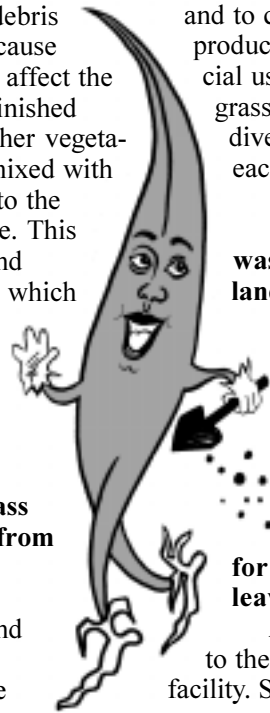
Q: What is yard waste?

A: Yard waste is defined as grass and leaves only. This includes crab grass and pine needles. Yard waste must be free

of any other waste, debris and contaminates because these items seriously affect the quality of Lincoln's finished compost product. Other vegetative wastes may be mixed with yard waste and sent to the city's composting site. This includes tree, bush and shrubbery trimmings which are less than one inch in diameter, vegetative garden wastes and flower cuttings.

Q: Why are grass and leaves banned from landfill disposal?

A: The City of Lincoln bans grass and leaf disposal to save valuable landfill space



and to create a recycled product which has a beneficial use. Over 14,000 tons of grass and leaves are diverted from the landfill each year.

Q: When is yard waste banned from the landfill?

A: Grass and leaves cannot be disposed of in the sanitary landfill from April 1 through Nov. 30.

Q: Why can't I use plastic bags for grass clippings and leaves?

A: Yard waste is taken to the City's composting facility. Since plastic does not

decompose, only biodegradable paper bags are accepted at this facility. There would be considerable expense if the City or haulers had to remove yard waste from plastic bags.

Q: What kind of container should I use for yard waste?

A: Use paper lawn bags. Many local stores will stock biodegradable, paper lawn bags. Or you could try a 32-gallon refuse container with a tight fitting lid. If you have your waste hauler pick up your yard waste, they may provide a 90-gallon, two wheel cart for you. (GH)

City's Composting Operation Saves Landfill Space

Grass clippings and leaves account for about one third of the residential waste stream during the growing season. When the State of Nebraska was developing strategies to promote waste reduction and recycling, this waste stream was targeted. It is a waste stream that can be separated from other wastes relatively easy and the composting process is relatively inexpensive when compared to other recycling options.

When the Nebraska State Legislature passed the Integrated Solid Waste Management Act in 1992 one of the key components was to prohibit the disposal of grass clippings and leaves in sanitary landfills during the growing season, from April 1 to Nov. 30 of each year. During this time, the state can fine any city or county up to \$5,000 per day for dumping grass clippings and leaves in landfills.

Based on this legislation, the City of Lincoln developed the 16-acre yard waste compost facility next to the Bluff Road Sanitary landfill (at Highway 77

and Bluff Road). This site receives about 20,000 tons of grass, leaves and brush each year. This is equivalent to about 2,000 garbage trucks during an eight month period.

Grass is mixed with leaves and wood chips to form windrows roughly six feet high and 12 feet wide. It takes about 9-12 months to complete the composting process. The material is screened to remove any debris and wood chips and placed in a curing pile for another three months. This finished material is then available to the public as LinGro (see accompanying article).

Since the program began in October 1992, the city has composted an estimated 140,000 tons of grass and leaves and wood chipped 192,400 tons of tree debris. The amount of tree debris includes tree debris that was wood chipped from the 1993 and 1997 storms as well as the material diverted from the landfill by the Parks and Recreation Department. For an average year the compost facility



Lincoln's 16-acre yard waste compost facility receives about 20,000 tons of grass, leaves and brush each year.

grinds about 6,000 tons of brush and tree debris.

The diversion of grass, leaves and brush to the composting program for ten years, has added over three years to the life of the sanitary landfill. If the program was discontinued and the yard waste was buried in the landfill, it would close in 2020 instead of the current projection date of 2024.

Partial funding for the city's composting program was provided by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Waste Reduction and Recycling Program.

Gene Hanlon, Recycling Coordinator, believes that the compost program is successful because it saves valuable land fill space and produces a beneficial product that improves soils in the county. (GH)

LINGRO

continued from page iii

LinGro compost in bulk quantities from select retail outlets in Lincoln. A nominal fee is charged for the material by these retailers. The 10 retailers that will make LinGro compost available to the public are:

- **All Care Grounds Maintenance**, 300 South Coddington Avenue; 438-5115
- **Campbell's Nurseries and Garden Centers**, 7000 S. 56th St.; 423-1133
- **General Excavating**, 6701 Cornhusker Highway; 467-1627
- **Nebraska Nursery and Color Gardens**, 7801 Pioneers Blvd.; 489-6543
- **Nemaha Nursery**, 430 W. Pioneers Blvd.; (call for appointment) 434-5488
- **Naturescapes Inc.**; 466-7771
- **Pine Lake Nursery**, 7250 Pine Lake Rd.; (call for appointment) 421-3584
- **Pine Valley Nursery and Landscaping**, 6901 W. O St.; (call for appointment) 435-8733
- **Precast Products and Landscape Village**, 1010 S. Coddington Avenue; 477-2255
- **Seeds of Life**, 12400 Holdrege St.; 730-8733



Is Your Yard Producing Unwanted Critters?



Sometimes it is easier to prevent or eliminate conducive conditions than control pests that are invading your house.

There are a number of conditions around the yard that may be contributing to increased populations of some pest invaders. Mulching has many benefits for the ornamental plants and trees in your yard by decreasing weed growth and preventing moisture loss, but it may also serve as habitat for several types of insects/pests that may move inside your home later. The more mulch/wood

chips you have and the longer it sits, the more likely there will be pillbugs, sowbugs, millipedes, and crickets living in it. Predators, like spiders and centipedes, will also increase in these areas. Most of the time, these critters find their way into the house in the fall of the year.

One way to use mulch and still reduce the critters is to use it farther away from the house. Another is to seal cracks and crevices in your house exterior to prevent entry. Another strategy might be to

anticipate these pests and use an insecticide barrier around the house in the fall to help prevent entry.

Compost is great stuff. But it has its own complement of insects that like to live in it, including many of the insects/pests that are also found in mulch. A poorly managed compost pile may produce stable flies. These flies look a lot like house flies, but can give a painful bite to people and pets. Another source of stable flies is animal excre-

ment. Removing this waste promptly will prevent the development of stable flies and later discomfort to people and outdoor pets.

Other conditions in the yard environment can be attractive to pests. Dense vegetation is attractive to many pests because of increased humidity; most insects survive better in higher humidity. You have probably noticed mosquitoes seem to be especially attracted to dense vegetation. Rabbits are also fond of dense vegetation or piles of brush that they can hide in. Snakes like to

live under concrete porches or under sidewalks. If foundations have cracks, snakes may enter basements. Mice can easily enter through small openings in basement foundations.

Some plants serve as a food source to insect species. A couple good examples are elm leaf beetles and boxelder bugs. Both of these pests enter homes in the fall to overwinter. Elm leaf beetles feed primarily on elm trees so if these beetles really

see CRITTERS on page v