

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

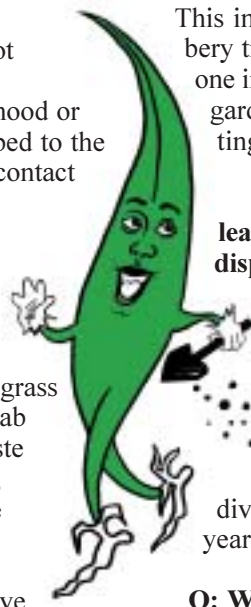
the customer.

- 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 contaminants 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)

Yard Smart Resources

City of Lincoln Recycling Office

Phone: 441-8215

Web site: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/pworks/waste/recycle

Recycling Hotline; Information on Managing Yard Waste, backyard composting, and much more; LinGro compost and wood chip availability.

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

Phone: 441-7180

Web site: lancaster.unl.edu

Educational resources on backyard composting, mulching grass clippings, lawn chemical use, and much more.

Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department

Phone: 441-8040

Disposal Lawn Chemicals, Complaints on backyard

Lincoln Solid Waste Management Association

Phone: 441-8284

Yard Waste Collection

Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Phone: 471-2394

Information on certification for private and commercial pesticide applicators

The Water Center

472-3305

Water Conservation

Poison Control Center (24 hours)

(800) 955-9119

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network

(800) 858-7378

Reduce Use of Herbicide on Lawns

Do you use a lawn service that applies fertilizers or chemical treatments to your lawn? Do you purchase weed and feed fertilizers purchased from local retailers on your lawn? If you do, you may be inadvertently contaminating the City's LinGro compost with a herbicide called clopyralid (pronounced clo-peer-uh-lid). This herbicide is used to kill dandelions, clover and ground ivy and can damage sensitive garden plants if compost containing it is misapplied to gardens.

City officials urge residents to check to see if the products used on their lawn contain this active ingredient. If it does, the City would like residents to mulch their grass clippings rather than collecting them and sending them to the compost facility.

Dow AgroScience, the company that held the initial patent on clopyralid has changed their product label indicating that the product should not be used on residential lawns. Other companies that make similar products with the same active ingredient have not modified their labels and their products are available to lawn services and local residents.

"The clopyralid levels found in

Lincoln's compost are not known to present health risks to people or animals," said Scott Holmes, Environmental Health Division Manager for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department.

In the last two years, clopyralid has been discovered in compost operations in several states. Gene Hanlon, Recycling Coordinator for the City of Lincoln said a survey of lawn companies last year indicated that the herbicide was being used locally to kill broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, clover and thistle. The City tested LinGro samples and found levels of clopyralid ranging from 13 parts per billion (ppb) to 23 ppb. Levels of clopyralid of 10 (ppb) or less can damage some plants. Plants that can be harmed by clopyralid include:

- legumes (peas, beans, lentils, clover)
- solanaceous (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers)
- composites (asters, sunflowers, daisies, petunias)
- other sensitive plants (carrots, lettuce, lupine)

Bio-assays using Lincoln's compost conducted by the University of Nebraska indicates that it is unlikely that damage will occur to sensitive plants if the

compost is properly applied and mixed thoroughly with the soil," said Brady Kappler, Weed Science Educator with the University of Nebraska. "Application of one inch of LinGro compost and mixed thoroughly with six inches of soil will typically have a net benefit to garden plants."

Officials in Lincoln are working with lawn services and chemical applicators to reduce the amount of clopyralid applied to residential lawns. Alternative products are available that will kill undesirable weeds and not damage the City's compost. Persons that continue to use clopyralid containing products on their lawn should mulch their grass clippings rather than collecting them and sending them to the composting facility. Mulching grass clippings will reduce mowing time, reduce disposal costs, return valuable nutrients to the soil and aid the composting facility in reducing the amount of clopyralid in its compost.

Additional information regarding clopyralid in compost can be obtained by contacting Gene Hanlon with the City of Lincoln 441-7043 or checking the City's Web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us. (GH)

City's Composting Operation Saves Landfill Space

The City of Lincoln maintains a 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 Compost.

Since the program began in October 1992, the city has composted an estimated 156,600 tons of grass and leaves and wood chipped 197,450 tons of tree debris. For an



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average year the compost facility grinds about 5,000 tons of brush and tree debris.

The diversion of grass, leaves and brush by the city for 11 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 2021 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.



Locations to Pick up or Purchase LinGro Compost

- The City of Lincoln has limited quantities of organic compost, called LinGro, available to the public each spring at the N. 48 Street Transfer Station located at 5101 N. 48 Street. This material must be self-loaded and is available at no cost, on a first-come, first-serve basis. Information on loading pick-ups can be obtained by contacting the Lincoln Recycling Office, 441-8215.
- Delivery of compost within a 50-mile radius of the Bluff Road Landfill is available for a fee. Call the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215 for more information.
- The following area firms have LinGro compost available for a fee: Campbell's Nurseries and Garden Centers, General Excavation, Nebraska Nursery and Color Gardens, Pine Valley Nursery and Landscaping, PreCast Productions, Inc., Seeds of Life. Landscapers can obtain compost upon request.
- Information on LinGro Compost is also available through the City's Web site: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/pworks/waste/recycle/lingro.htm (DJ)