

## ***Yard Waste: Frequently Asked Questions***

---

### **What is Yard Waste?**

Yard waste is vegetative waste resulting from the care and maintenance of landscaped areas, lawns, and gardens. Yard waste includes leaves, grass clippings, brush, garden wastes, tree trunks, holiday trees and prunings from trees or shrubs.

### **What is the difference between source separated yard waste and commingled yard waste?**

Yard waste that is separated from other solid wastes at the point of generation and placed into a container is considered to be source separated, i.e. grass clippings or leaves collected in plastic or paper bags or bins would be considered source separated yard waste. Whereas, yard wastes combined with other solid wastes in the same container are referred to as commingled yard waste.

### **Am I required to source separate my yard waste?**

Some communities already require residents to source separate yard waste from the general trash; others do not. Contact your city, solid waste management district, or the company which picks up your trash to find out what your community requires.

### **May source separated yard waste be commingled at the landfill for disposal?**

No, landfills are not permitted to accept mixed or source-separated yard waste for disposal, except under specific circumstances as outlined in OAC Rule 3745-27-19(O). This paragraph of the rule provides some relief from the general yard waste prohibition to landfills that implement a yard waste restriction program. Landfills utilizing such a program may dispose of yard waste resulting from “incidental acceptance”, storm damage or natural catastrophe, vehicle loads of source-separated yard wastes refused by the publicly-available composting facility located in the same county (the load must be accompanied by a refusal form from the composting facility), and disposal of tree trunks and stumps.

### **Can a generator or hauler commingle yard waste?**

## ***Yard Waste: Frequently Asked Questions***

---

Local governments or Solid Waste Management Districts (SWMDs) may have local regulations regarding yard waste segregation and collection. Service or contractual agreements may also include yard waste collection services by the solid waste hauler. There are no state laws or rules prohibiting either generators or solid waste haulers from commingling yard waste (including source-separated yard waste) with solid waste prior to acceptance at a solid waste landfill, transfer facility, or incinerator. However, Ohio EPA encourages individuals, haulers, local governments, and SWMDs to consider alternate management programs for yard waste, such as composting.

### **Can a generator or hauler commingle yard waste?**

No, composting facilities may refuse to accept source separated yard waste. When refusing a load of source separated yard waste, the composting facility is required to fill out a Refusal of Acceptance Form. The hauler may seek to use another composting facility or present the Refusal of Acceptance Form to the municipal solid waste landfill, incineration facility, or transfer facility accepting the waste for disposal. The completed forms are to be kept on file with the daily log of operations for each disposal facility.

### **Does the composting facility have to remove the yard waste from the plastic bags and treat them as solid waste?**

Yes, the yard waste must be released from the plastic bag prior to shredding so that the plastic is not incorporated into the windrows or piles. All plastic containers used to separate yard waste must then be collected and removed from the composting facility as soon as practicable, but no later than seven days, in accordance with the composting rules. Paper bags are acceptable in the composting process.

### **More Sources of Information Regarding Yard Waste Disposal**

1. Visit [epa.ohio.gov/dmwm](http://epa.ohio.gov/dmwm)
2. Contact your local health department.
3. Contact the Ohio EPA District Offices - Division of Materials and Waste Management inspectors.  
Ohio EPA District Offices:
  - Central District Office: (614) 728-3778
  - Northeast District Office: (330) 963-1200
  - Northwest District Office: (419) 352-8461
  - Southeast District Office: (740) 385-8501
  - Southwest District Office: (937) 285-6357
4. Contact Ohio EPA Central Office's Solid Waste Compliance and Inspection Support Unit at (614) 644-2621