

CITY OF LINCOLN YARD WASTE COMPOSTING PROGRAM **FACT SHEET**

From April 1 through November 30 of each year, State law prohibits mixing grass clippings and leaves with household trash headed for the City landfill. Communities disposing of grass and leaves during that time are subject to a fine of \$5,000 per day.

Residents have several options for handling yard waste:

- Separate grass and leaf collection is available from local waste haulers for a fee.
- Residents can hire a lawn service.
- Grass and leaves can be hauled to the 48th Street Transfer Station.
- Residents can mulch and compost their grass and leaves. Backyard composting workshops sponsored by the City of Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County are held each month. A schedule of the workshops is listed on the reverse side of this Fact Sheet. A free backyard compost bin or composting thermometer is given to each participant in the workshop.

Grass and leaves includes such material as crab grass and pine needles. Tree trimmings, brush and garden waste can be combined with yard waste for those who subscribe to a separate collection, however, the tree trimmings must be smaller than one inch in diameter and be bundled in four- to five-foot lengths. If a person does not subscribe to the separate yard waste collection, this material can be placed with the regular trash.

Those who mix grass and leaves with household trash or who put yard waste into plastic bags instead of paper bags or approved waste containers may have the material left at their curbs. The only approved containers for yard waste are paper lawn bags, 32-gallon containers with tight fitting lids or larger containers provided by the waste hauler.

Containers that are larger than 32 gallons are very difficult to empty without the risk of injury, and the waste hauler may leave this material at the curb as well. Many local waste haulers can provide 90-gallon carts that are emptied mechanically to reduce back injuries. These carts also save money because they are less expensive than the paper lawn bags.

The City conducts random inspections of loads coming into the landfill and composting site. If household trash is found to be mixed with yard waste, the waste haulers could be fined up to \$50, and the cost may be passed on to the property owner.

In the first ten years of the program the City has diverted more than 154,500 tons of grass and leaves and 195,000 tons of storm debris, brush and wood from the landfill. On average, the compost facility receives over 14,000 tons of grass and leaves and over 5,500 tons of brush per growing season. The program has added about two years to the life of the landfill. If the current program is stopped and the material buried in the landfill, it would close three years earlier, in 2023 instead of the current projection of 2026.

LinGro is the organic compost produced primarily from recycled grass, leaves and wood

chips. It is available to the public in bulk quantities from area retailers and landscapers for a nominal fee. A limited quantity is also available at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis at the 48th Street Transfer Station. Wood chips are also available free at the Recycling Drop-off site south east of the entrance to the 48th Street Transfer Station. Residents must self-load this material. The City will also load peoples pick up trucks for a fee at the 48th Street Transfer Street Station.

***For more information, contact the Lincoln Recycling Office at 441-8215
or 441-7043***

Spring Backyard Composting Workshops

Backyard composting demonstrations will be presented at the City Yard Waste Composting Demonstration Site, 50th and Colby. These demonstrations will show you how to be successful with backyard composting. You will see several types of composting bins and learn how to use them. Demonstrations will be presented on the third Saturday of each month starting at 8:30 a.m., April 17th. Participants will receive a free compost bin or composting thermometer.

Neighborhood Workshop Schedule (These begin at 6:30 p.m.)

| <u>Location</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|--|-------------|
| Air Park Recreation Center (3720 N.W. 46th St) | April 13 |
| Belmont Recreation Center (1234 Judson) | April 20 |
| Calvert Recreation Center (4500 Stockwell) | April 22 |
| Easterday Recreation Center (6130 Adams) | April 27 |
| Irving Recreation Center (2010 Van Dorn) | April 29 |

Contact Information

Questions on identifying your hauler to subscribe for special yard waste collection:

Lincoln Solid Waste Management Association 475-3876

Questions on backyard composting:

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension
in Lancaster County 441-7180

Questions on LinGro compost or wood chips:

Recycling Hot-line 441-8215

Questions on lawn chemicals:

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension
in Lancaster County 441-7180

Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department 441-8021