



-Lawn & Garden Services- **Waste Reduction Fact Sheet**

GENERAL TIPS

- ◆ Inform your suppliers and customers about your 3Rs program. Tell them what you are doing and how it is benefiting them and the environment.
- ◆ Encourage customers to keep their lawn at least three inches in length. This will usually choke out obnoxious weeds such as crabgrass.
- ◆ Offer customers pesticide-free services to remove weeds and pests. Weeds can always be removed manually and they will not return if the root is extracted completely. When infestations are low, pests can be pulled off trees and shrubs, and infested leaves or branches can be removed.
- ◆ You may want to market your business as a prevention and information service. For example, offer backyard pest assessments to deal with pests before pesticide application is required.
- ◆ Know your pest! What are its natural enemies, can natural/non-chemical controls be used, and when are these methods most effective (e.g. less pesticide will be required if you apply it at the correct stage in the pest's life cycle)?
- ◆ Know which plants encourage pests and which ones repel pests. For example, marigolds and chrysanthemums are well known insect repellents.

In order to achieve the target of at least 60% diversion of waste from disposal by 2008, the Province of Ontario has passed regulations requiring specific waste generators to conduct waste audits, develop waste reduction workplans and source separate recyclable materials. Details of Ontario's 3Rs Regulations and guides on audits and workplans can be found on the Ministry of the Environment's website, www.ene.gov.on.ca/pic.htm.

Many companies have already instituted waste reduction programs knowing that the financial benefits to their business would be substantial. These benefits come in the form of reduced disposal charges, lower supply cost and an enhanced corporate image. In general, waste reduction is a means of achieving a higher degree of efficiency in your operation.

This fact sheet and others in the series have been developed by the Association of Municipal Recycling Coordinators (AMRC), and funded by the Province of Ontario, to assist you in your waste diversion efforts. The tips given here are by no means a complete list of possible reduction methods, but they will provide a solid basis for beginning a waste diversion program.

- ◆ Set up a waste reduction committee and outline the goals and objectives of your program.
- ◆ Train and educate all staff on various waste reduction techniques, and proper materials handling, storage and transportation methods. Also ensure that all suppliers, service employers and employees have proper Workplace Hazardous Materials System (WHMIS) training. These measures will decrease the risk of accidents and spills, thus reducing the number of injuries and the amount of waste generated.
- ◆ Whenever possible, substitute hazardous materials with non-hazardous alternatives such as replacing toxic pesticides with insecticidal soaps or natural gums/oils which smother or trap insects.
- ◆ A clean mulch of materials such as grass clippings or hay will keep down weed growth and protect the soil from drying and erosion.
- ◆ Investigate natural and non-chemical controls such as biological predators (e.g. predator insects, parasites, bacteria, viruses, fungi), and pheromones and hormones traps.
- ◆ Encourage customers to allow plant diversity in their lawns (this may include plants that are homes to natural predators or plants considered weeds) and to plant different plants in their gardens each year. Plant rotation helps to minimize infestations of insects or disease.
- ◆ If possible, implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. IPM combines several control techniques to manage pest populations with minimal pesticides.
- ◆ Avoid using broad spectrum pesticides which can eliminate a pest's natural predators (and other useful insects) and lead to further infestations. When feasible, use pest-specific products.

REDUCE

- ◆ Educate staff on the proper operation of equipment to minimize waste created through misuse.
- ◆ Use compostable fibre containers instead of plastic plant trays and ensure that they are composted.
- ◆ Purchase only the necessary quantities of materials needed (i.e. for the current growing season) and in bulk or in the appropriate-sized reusable or recyclable containers.
- ◆ Keep track of all materials purchased. Properly store them and implement an efficient inventory system which uses the oldest stock first.
- ◆ Do not put dates on your advertisements. This will allow you to use them again next year.
- ◆ Double-side your advertisements and reduce the size of the pamphlet or brochure.
- ◆ Check application equipment frequently for leaks and make sure that it is working properly.
- ◆ Develop, schedule and record proper preventative/corrective maintenance practices for all equipment.
- ◆ Carefully follow each pesticide's and fertilizer's application instructions (e.g. applying too high a dose of pesticide may kill valuable pest predators, while too little may stimulate pests and require further applications).
- ◆ Use spot spraying not wide-area or broadcast pesticide application. To reduce drift, only apply when the wind speed is less than 15 km/hr.
- ◆ Use separate applicators for each specific pesticide used. This will minimize rinsing requirements.

REUSE

- ◆ Compost old garden plants and leaves/branches (make sure they're not infested). Then sell or give the compost to customers; or encourage customers to turn leftover plant material into their gardens to act as mulch.
- ◆ Capture and reuse spilled or leaked materials. If this is not feasible use absorbent towels to collect the spilled materials, rather than washing them into the sewer with water.
- ◆ Repair old or broken equipment and/or purchase used items instead of buying new ones.
- ◆ Reuse clay or plastic pots that are left over for transplanting.
- ◆ Use triple-rinse techniques or a pressure rinse for cleaning application equipment and containers. Reuse rinse water as mix water for future applications of the same chemical.
- ◆ Encourage customers to compost grass clippings or leave them on the lawn as mulch.
- ◆ Set up a return-to-vendor (or refund) system with your suppliers for all unused materials. For example, work with suppliers to accept unopened, unexpired products back for reuse (e.g. pesticides). If they will not, try other suppliers or examine other methods of reusing or recycling the material (e.g. local waste reuse/exchange programs).

RECYCLE

- ◆ Purchase or rent a wood chipper to make chips out of branches. These materials can be sold or given to farmers, municipalities, customers or other businesses to be used as bedding, covering, or in their composters.
- ◆ Recycle all solid non-hazardous wastes including fine paper, cardboard, plastics, glass and wood (including pallets, branches etc). Or encourage employees to take blue box materials home.
- ◆ Support recycling efforts by purchasing materials containing recycled materials such as paper.
- ◆ Segregate all waste materials to minimize contamination and spills, and to increase their recycling potential.
- ◆ Advise customers to have their grass cut frequently and leave the clippings on the lawn rather than disposing or composting them - "grasscycling".

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Ministry of the Environment
Public Information Centre*
1-800-565-4923
picemail@ene.gov.on.ca
www.ene.gov.on.ca/pic.htm

*Composting Council
of Canada*
1-877-571-4769
ccc@compost.org
www.compost.org

*Ontario Waste Management
Association (OWMA)*
905-791-9500
mgoulding@owma.org
www.owma.org

*Association of Municipal
Recycling Coordinators (AMRC)*
519-823-1990
amrc@amrc.ca
www.amrc.ca

Your Local Municipality

*Note—There are many websites dedicated to reducing pesticide use.
Please visit these sites, or ask your local municipality for more information.*

This publication is part of a series of Waste Reduction Fact sheets that are available from your local municipality. Additional Fact Sheets can be obtained on a variety of industrial, commercial and institutional sectors (automotive, commercial printing, etc.), and various business operations (e.g. offices, cafeterias and lunch rooms, etc.). Please contact your local municipality for more information.

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