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Region 5 Waste Program

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Compost Based Stormwater Best Management Practices Webinars

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Introduction

Compost-based stormwater best management practices (BMPs) combine two important EPA initiatives:

- [Sustainable Materials Management](#)
- [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\) stormwater regulations](#)

EPA is helping change the way our society protects the environment and conserves resources for future generations. Building on the familiar concept of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, this approach changes how we think about environmental protection and recognizes the impacts of the vast amount of materials we consume.

Recycling organic materials, such as green yard waste and food waste, is an way to change the impacts of the materials that we use for stormwater management. As more commercial composters have entered the market to recycle municipal solid waste, EPA recognized the need to develop new markets for compost.

NPDES regulations require that municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) control the quantity and quality of stormwater reaching nearby water bodies.

Control of stormwater quality is particularly important at construction sites, where there is often a large disturbed area that can contribute sediment and other contaminants to stormwater.

Compost-based BMPs, such as compost blankets, compost filter berms, and compost filter socks, provide effective treatment of stormwater when used in construction and post-construction stormwater BMPs.

Why use them?

- Compost retains a large volume of water, thus helping to prevent/reduce erosion, reduce runoff, and establish vegetation.
- Compost improves downstream water quality by retaining pollutants such as heavy metals, nitrogen, phosphorus, oil and grease, fuels, herbicides, and pesticides.
- Nutrients and hydrocarbons adsorbed and/or trapped by compost are decomposed by naturally occurring microorganisms.
- Compost improves soil structure and nutrient content, which reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.



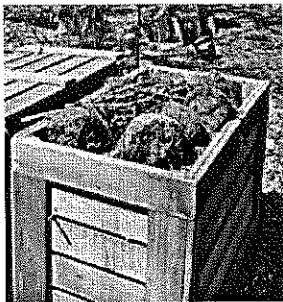
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10 Reasons to Start Composting

Published on April 15, 2011, Last Updated on April 24, 2013



There is no denying that there is a clear win-win situation that comes from regularly composting the planet's organic waste. While it may take a little effort to set up your own at-home composting system, the results will be worth it. Composting is an important way that we can give back to the local community and our natural world.

Why is composting is a great contribution to healing the planet?

1. Reduces landfill waste.

A recent estimate from the Environmental Protection Agency predicted that up to one-fourth of all landfill waste could have been thrown into the compost. It's amazing to think that a quarter of our waste could be turned into nutrient-rich soil. And that leads us to the next reason why we should compost.

2. Adds to the creation of new, nutrient rich soil.

Composting organic waste creates an excellent, full-spectrum, nutrient-rich addition that enhances the overall soil quality of our [organic gardens](#) and farms. Adding compost to gardening soil can actually boost the production of both edible and ornamental plants.

3. Reduction in overall greenhouse emissions.

Composting lowers the amount of warming gases created by organic material in our landfills. The EPA estimates that landfills are the single biggest emitters of toxic methane gases. If everyone composted, methane levels on our planet could be reduced drastically!

4. Composting betters overall air quality.

Instead of burning yard waste (such as dried leaves, twigs, and branches) many gardeners are turning to compost as an air-friendly alternative. Burning old brush in trash cans may release deadly chemical dioxins into the air, leading to asthma symptoms, allergic reactions and overall toxic air.

5. Fertilizes and deters garden pests.

Beyond the important micronutrients that compost offers, it also acts as a natural, slow-release garden fertilizer and natural pesticide. This also prevents harmful toxic run-off into our waterways.

6. Neutralizes soil.

Adding compost to your soil prevents it from becoming too acidic, or too alkaline. This leads to soil that is usually perfect for the growth of most garden plants.

7. Creation of aggregates.

Compost has the ability to stimulate soil particle clusters, which make for healthy soil structure. When we add compost to soils, we also increase the amount of air pockets and channels between individual soil structures, allowing the soil to hold air, water and important nutrients. This also powerfully aids in the soil's ability to support root structures of plants, and makes it easier to work with for gardeners.

8. Less erosion.

Adding compost to soil prevents it from eroding. This is an important fact, considering that much of the earth's soil has been depleted of nutrients. When soil erodes, our water sources become threatened, as polluted, highly pesticide and fertilizer-laden soil turns to run-off into lakes, streams and ponds. Compost increases the soil's ability to harbor root systems that prevent this runoff, as well as the overall ability to hold in water. In fact, a 5% increase in organic material (compost) can increase the amount of water absorption capacity by four times.

9. Promotes biodiversity

It is a well-known fact that using compost in our soils adds to the diversification and sustainability of many life forms. From birds to bacteria, fungi to insects and worms, composted soil is simply richer in the needed nutrients for Mother Nature's creatures. What is more, when there are more life forms living in the soil, plants grow healthier and happier, as the soil becomes more aerated.

10. Great for landscaping borders

Sprinkle a little compost alongside flowerbeds for a great green-alternative for landscaping.

Can you think of any more benefits of composting? If I missed anything, please let me know in the comments below.

-Dr. Edward F. Group III, DC, ND, DACBN, DABFM

- **Batteries**

Linn County Residents can drop-off and recycle automotive and household batteries for FREE at either Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency location. We subsidize and support this program from tipping fees at the landfill.

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW	1954 County Home Rd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404	Marion, IA 52302
Get Directions	Get Directions

- **Computers**

Linn County residents can drop off computers and computer equipment at either Agency location free of charge. We subsidize and support this program through tipping fees at the landfill.

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW	1954 County Home Rd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404	Marion, IA 52302
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- **Televisions**

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW	1954 County Home Rd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404	Marion, IA 52302
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- **Phones**

Dropoff Locations

1954 County Home Rd	2250 A St SW
Marion, IA 52302	Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
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- **Copy Machines**

Fees

Resident Fees Free

Dropoff Locations

1954 County Home Rd	2250 A St SW
Marion, IA 52302	Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
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- **AV Equipment**

Accepted at no charge for Linn County residents at both Agency sites. We subsidize and support this program through tipping fees at the landfill.

Dropoff Locations

1954 County Home Rd 2250 A St SW
Marion, IA 52302 Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
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- **Wood Waste**

Attached hardware such as hinges, nails and door knobs do not need to be removed. Wood surfaces with laminates are okay. Wood surfaces covered with non lead-based paint, stain, varnish, or veneer are okay. Nails and screws do not need to be removed.

Fees

Resident Fees 15.00
Business Fees 15.00

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW 1954 County Home Rd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 Marion, IA 52302
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- **Leaves**

Fees

Resident Fees 18.00
Business Fees 18.00

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW 1954 County Home Rd
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404 Marion, IA 52302
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- **Plant/Grass Clippings**

Yard waste from landscapers and businesses, and all trailer loads, is accepted only at 2250 A Street SW, Cedar Rapids. Small, residential loads are accepted at County Home Road as well. No limbs thicker than 4 inches will be accepted at this location.

Fees

Resident Fees 18.00
Business Fees 18.00

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
[Get Directions](#)

- **Video Game Systems**

Dropoff Locations

2250 A St SW 1954 County Home Rd
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Compost, Recycling & Wood Recovery

2250 A St. SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
(319) 398-5163
[Get Directions](#)

Landfill & Recycling

1954 County Home Rd.
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 377-5290
[Get Directions](#)

Regular Hours:
Monday-Saturday:
7:00am - 4:30pm

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Recycling Guide

Find out where to put all your recycling materials.

E-Newsletter Signup

Sign up for our latest newsletters.



Electronics recycling

Electronics waste or "E-waste" is the outdated and obsolete electronics that you no longer want, and it's a waste stream that's growing fast. Many electronics, especially TVs and computers, contain toxic materials such as lead, cadmium and mercury. Reusing and recycling electronics keeps these toxic materials out of our landfills and also recovers valuable resources.

The Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency offers free electronics recycling or "e-cycling" to Linn County residents at both its [locations](#).

Among the items accepted for recycling:

- **Computer equipment** - Monitors, towers, keyboards, laptops, mice, printers, scanners.
- **Office equipment** - Copy machines, cellular and land-line telephones, fax machines, calculators
- **Audio/visual equipment** - TVs, VCRs, DVD players, satellite dishes, stereos, MP3 players

- **Gaming systems** - Playstation 3, Xbox 360, Wii, PSP, Vita, DS, and others.

What happens to my electronics?

After you drop off your e-waste, it is locally dismantled or "de-manufactured" into core components that are then used to manufacture new recycled goods. Such components include glass, plastic and circuit boards. The circuit boards themselves contain reusable metals such as copper, gold and silver.

Secure handling of data is available

If you're concerned about sensitive data, secure handling of data is also available. You can take the hard drive or other secure data components directly to the de-manufacturer to watch them being shredded. However, once an item is dropped off at the Solid Waste Agency's recycling center, it is handled securely. All data will be shredded (if machine is de-manufactured) or government level "wiped," if components can be recycled. We do not allow scavenging of electronics turned in for recycling.

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Compost, Recycling & Wood Recovery

2250 A St. SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
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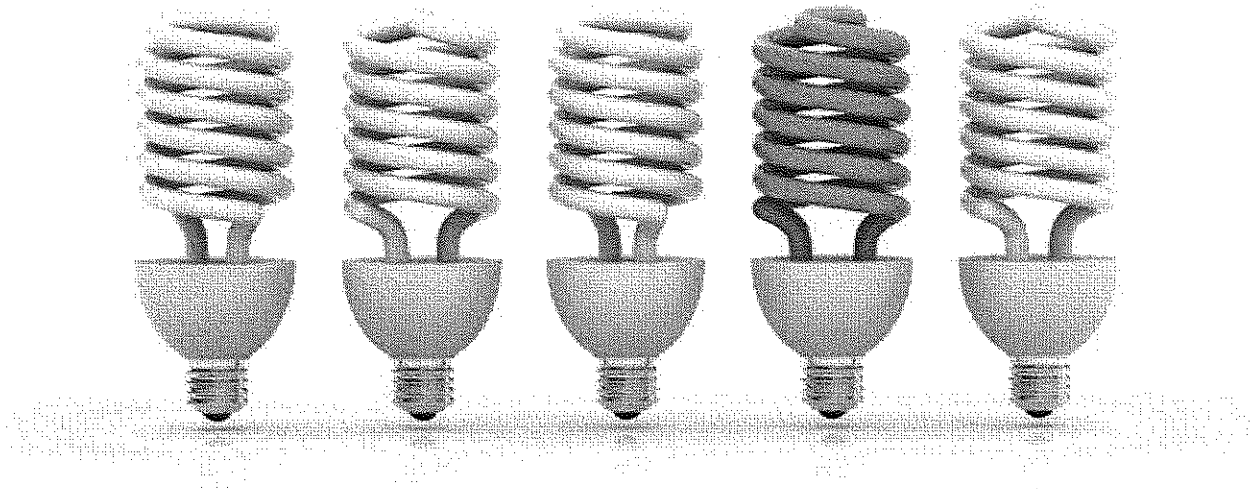
Landfill & Recycling

1954 County Home Rd.
Marion, IA 52302
(319) 377-5290
[Get Directions](#)

Regular Hours:

Monday-Saturday:
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Fluorescent light bulb recycling

When your fluorescent bulbs burn out, it's important to recycle them. You can do that at the Cedar Rapids/Linn County Solid Waste Agency. Just drop off your tube-style or compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs at one of our two [locations](#). The service is free for Linn County residents.

Why should I recycle fluorescents?

It's because they contain mercury -- 3.5 to 15 milligrams, depending on the type of lamp, the manufacturer, and when it was manufactured. Recycling keeps that mercury out of the environment. Recycling also reuses the glass tubing, metal end caps and phosphor powder contained in fluorescent bulbs.

Be careful handling your CFLs

If one accidentally breaks (download a copy of the [EPA CFL Cleanup Guide](#))

- Ventilate your room
- Don't let anyone walk through the breakage area for 15 minutes.
- Use stiff paper or cardboard on a hard surface and scoop glass fragments and powder into a glass jar with a lid.
- Use sticky tape to pick up any remaining fragments and powder.
- Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels.
- Do not use a vacuum or broom on hard surfaces, you'll just end up spreading the particles around the room.
- Use a vacuum, however, on carpet... but only in the breakage area.
- Dispose of the pieces in your outdoor trash container.
- Wash your hands when you're done.

What happens after I drop off my light bulbs?

Your CFL and other bulbs are stored in breakage-resistant containers at the Solid Waste Agency until they can be shipped to a recycler. When a CFL reaches a recycler, the components are separated and sent to manufacturers.

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