

GARDEN ORGANICS

On average, about one third of our household waste consists of garden organics such as grass cuttings that can be composted. By sending these resources to landfill we deprive our gardens of potential natural fertilisers and create a pollution problem for our landfill sites and surrounding environments.

When household garbage is sent to landfill, it is compacted, buried and covered, creating an oxygen-free

environment. When this happens, garden organics and food scraps release large amounts of natural acids. These acids mix with the rest of our household garbage – chemicals, plastics and metals – and create a toxic waste called leachate. Leachate from landfills can pollute groundwater and waterways. The decay of these organic materials also produces the gases carbon dioxide and methane, contributing to the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Follow these simple tips to reduce your garden waste.

- Design your garden so that you create less garden waste – by choosing and placing plants carefully and reusing garden waste
- Build a compost heap.
- Leave grass clippings and leaves to break down naturally in the open air. Reuse leaves and prunings as mulch.
- Use the green organics collection provided by your local council, or take your excess to your local landfill for composting.

MORE INFORMATION

- www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/spd_org_recycledorganics.htm - Has an easy guide to mulching, composting and worm farming as well as other compost related material.
- www.cleanup.com.au/au/LivingGreener/composting.html - Clean Up Australia's guide to composting
- www.epa.nsw.gov.au/earthworks- 'Down to Earth' (Earthworks notes) available
- www.rco.on.ca/composting.htm - Fact sheets on a wide range of various types of composting at the Council of Ontario website.
- www.foe.org.au- Friends of the Earth 'Low Waste Garden' information series (follow the links to Low Waste Garden website)
- www.mastercomposter.com - - A site dedicated to the art of composting

