

FAQ

(Frequently Asked Questions)

Yard Trimmings Management

On January 1, 2007, a ban on disposal of yard trimmings will become effective at the Cherry Island Landfill. Northern New Castle County residents and businesses will no longer be able to dispose of leaves, grass clippings and other yard trimmings with their regular trash. Yard trimmings must be segregated from the trash and managed separately.

What are “yard trimmings”?

Yard trimmings include plant material resulting from lawn maintenance, gardening and landscaping activities. These plant materials include grass, leaves, prunings, brush, shrubs, woody vegetation, Christmas trees and tree limbs up to four inches in diameter.

What are my options for disposing of yard trimmings?

- Manage the material on your own property through mulching or grasscycling (leaving the grass on the lawn)
- Drop off the material at a yard trimmings processing facility. For a list of drop off sites visit:
<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/yardwaste/YardWasteHomeowners.htm>
- Arrange to have the material picked up by a company that will drop it off at a yard trimmings processing facility. For a list of companies currently providing this service visit:
<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B999ACA1-F280-45DB-A110-4A579CBA1463/0/CollectionServices2.pdf>

I don't know anything about managing yard trimmings on my own property. How does it work?

The Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control (DNREC) web site has information on residential yard trimming management.

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/yardwaste/Default.htm>

Also, you can call DNREC at 739-9403. The University of Delaware's Master Gardener program also offers advice and workshops on home and community composting and mulching. For more information, contact U of D at 831-2667.

Yard trimmings will decompose naturally under the right conditions. This natural process has been demonstrated to be an effective waste management technique that produces a useful end product. Two common methods for processing yard trimmings are (1) mulching, and (2) composting. Mulching is a process of mechanically shredding yard trimmings and applying the material to the soil. Mulch is commonly used to reduce the growth of weeds and minimize the need for watering. Compost is a humus-like material that is produced from both mechanical and chemical degradation of yard trimmings and other organic material. Compost can be spread across your lawn or

mixed into garden soil to improve fertility. It is important to remember that while composting occurs naturally, for proper aeration and blending to occur, it is necessary to occasionally turn your compost pile. Allowing lawn clippings and other yard waste to accumulate without actively managing them will be considered a violation of New Castle County's Property Maintenance Code.

What are the restrictions on the accumulation of yard trimmings on my property?

New Castle County's Property Maintenance Code places restrictions on the accumulation of trash and rubbish, including yard trimmings. Section 307.1 states that a property owner, occupant, or person responsible for a developed or undeveloped parcel of land is not allowed to place or to permit refuse, rubbish, garbage, trash, or other waste material to be placed or accumulated upon a parcel or right-of-way abutting a parcel. According to Section 202, Rubbish is considered to be combustible and noncombustible waste materials and trash and debris, except garbage; and also includes the residue from the burning of wood, coal, coke and other combustible materials, paper, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, excelsior, rubber, leather, tree branches, yard trimmings, cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery and dust and other similar materials.

Violations of the Property Maintenance Code for accumulation of rubbish can result in fines from \$250 up to \$1,000 per day. Click on the link below to access the Property Maintenance Code.

<http://www.co.new-castle.de.us/landuse/home/fileuploads/images/lawspage/chapter%207%20property%20maintenance%20code.pdf>

Yard Trimmings that are properly managed shall not be considered rubbish under the Property Management Code. Click on the link below for more information about how to properly manage yard trimmings.

<http://www.dnrec.state.de.us/DNREC2000/Divisions/AWM/hw/sw/compost.htm#WhatIsCompost>

If I am unable to compost or mulch on my own property, how will I find someone to pick up yard trimmings?

Contact your trash hauler. If your hauler will not provide the service, contact other trash haulers or landscaping companies to find out who will pick up yard trimmings and at what price. A list of trash haulers that service New Castle County may be found at the link below

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/NR/rdonlyres/B999ACA1-F280-45DB-A110-4A579CBA1463/0/CollectionServices2.pdf>

Can I bring yard trimmings to New Castle County parkland?

New Castle County will not accept yard trimmings at any parkland. Disposal of yard trimmings in county parkland is strictly prohibited and will result in fines from \$100 up to \$1,000 per day.

I'd like to open a yard trimmings processing business. Where is this permitted?

A yard trimmings processing business can be permitted on property that is zoned I (Industrial) and HI (Heavy Industrial), and in the OR (Office Regional), BP (Business Park) zoning districts with certain conditions. Community-based mulching operations may also be permitted in certain residential zoning districts with permitted use. DNREC approval to operate a yard trimmings business may also be required. Information on DNREC requirements may be found at the following link:

<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/yardwaste/>

The FAQ series only summarizes or highlights portions of the New Castle County Code. In all applications, the New Castle County Code must be consulted. The language in the Code prevails over the FAQ.

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