



Forest Preserves Don't Need Your Yard Waste

Local residents should not dump leaves, yard clippings, fallen branches or any yard waste into the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Instead, your yard waste belongs:

- **In your yard:** Beneficial native insects spend the winter in the ground, under leaf litter and even in the stems of dead plant material—improving the soil and providing food for birds. Leave last summer's dead plant material and spread a layer of leaves in garden beds and your yard. During summer, leave your grass clippings on your lawn instead of bagging them. These changes mean less work for you and free nutrients for your lawn and garden.
- **In your compost bin:** Composting at home has never been easier. Enhance your soil by recycling yard waste and food scraps in a bin you build yourself or buy at a hardware store or garden center. Check with your city, town or village for any rules related to home composting.
- **In a commercial composting facility:** Ask your city, town or village if they have a composting program—some provide yard waste bins with regular collection, others offer on-demand collection and require you to bag your yard waste. If they don't have a program, encourage them to start one. Commercial composting facilities in and around Cook County also accept yard waste drop-offs.

Using a lawn service? Ask them what happens to your yard waste and let them know that the Forest Preserves doesn't need it.

Check out composting and sustainable gardening events:

fpdcc.com/conservationathome

Not convinced? People caught dumping yard waste (or anything) in the Forest Preserves can be fined up to \$500.