

# CHANGES TO YARD WASTE COLLECTION

## Regular Plastic Bags Not Allowed After January 1

IN MAY 2014, THE LOUISVILLE – JEFFERSON COUNTY WASTE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ADOPTED A YARD WASTE CONTAINER REGULATION (51.507R) CLARIFYING COLLECTION PROCEDURES. RESIDENTS WHO UTILIZE YARD WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES MUST USE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONTAINERS: REUSABLE BIN, PAPER YARD WASTE BAG, OR COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC BAG MEETING ASTM D6400 STANDARDS.

### ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS:

**WHAT IS YARD WASTE?** Yard waste includes organic waste generated during regular household landscaping and gardening activities. Rocks, dirt, gravel, flower pots, and pot liners are not considered yard waste.

**ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO SETTING OUT YARD WASTE FOR COLLECTION?** Yes. Mulching and/or composting at home are often the fastest and cheapest ways to manage your yard waste.

#### WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS IF I NEED TO HAVE MY YARD WASTE COLLECTED?

**Best:** Reusable containers are often cheaper than using single-use bags in the long run. Bins should have sturdy handles for collection crews, a capacity between 20 and 40 gallons, weigh no more than 60 pounds when filled, and be covered with a secure lid.

**Next Best:** Paper yard waste bags that are not over filled and are folded closed.

**Still Good:** Compostable plastic bags should clearly state they meet ASTM D6400 standards for composting. Bags marked “biodegradable” do not meet the requirement for this regulation. The compostable bags should be securely tied.

**WHY IS USING COMPOSTABLE BAGS IMPORTANT?** After your yard waste is collected, it is delivered to a compost facility. Regular plastic bags are not compostable and must be separated from the yard waste. Removing plastic bags increases processing costs and remaining shreds reduce demand for the compost. Compostable bags or reusable containers greatly reduce the amount of plastic sent to local compost facilities. This reduces processing costs and enhances the quality of the finished compost.

**CAN I STILL BUNDLE MY BRANCHES?** Yes.

**DOES THIS AFFECT MY REGULAR GARBAGE COLLECTION?** No, this change only impacts yard waste collection.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I SET MY YARD WASTE IN A REGULAR PLASTIC BAG?** Beginning January 1st, 2015, yard waste in plastic bags will not be collected and the homeowner may be subject to fines.

**WHAT CAN I DO IN PEAK YARD WASTE SEASONS?** First reduce the volume of leaves by chopping them with your mower. Then, if you still have large amounts, use one of our free fall drop-off sites.

For more information, visit [www.louisvilleky.gov/solidwaste](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/solidwaste) or call MetroCall at 311.



#### ACCEPTABLE CONTAINERS



REUSABLE BINS



PAPER BAGS



COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC

# LOVE 'EM AND LEAVE 'EM LOUISVILLE

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR HANDLING YARD WASTE AT HOME

**LEAF MULCH AND GRASS CLIPPINGS OFFER A NUMBER OF BENEFITS FOR YOUR LAWN! Love the beauty of leaves and grass, then leave the clippings where they fall.**

- Provides a natural fertilizer for a greener, healthier lawn
- Improves soil structure providing better drainage, better water retention, and fewer weeds

### \*RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A HEALTHIER, GREENER LAWN:

**SET YOUR MOWER ON MAXIMUM HEIGHT!** The higher you mow your grass, the healthier it will be. The roots will be deeper, allowing your lawn to stay green with less water. Deep roots also prevent soil erosion and promote thicker grass growth. Taller grass helps stop weeds from growing by creating more shade to prevent weed germination. Follow the one-third rule: never cut more than one-third of the total height of the grass when you mow. Your lawn will thank you for it!

**OR EVEN BETTER...GROW MORE, MOW LESS!** If you feel like mowing your lawn is a constant battle, try replacing your turf-grass with plants you don't have to mow. Low-mow landscaping can save you time, money, and hassle. There are lots of options to choose from, such as trees, shrubs, flowers, groundcover, edible plants, and even low-mow grasses. For more low-mow tips, visit: [www.louisvilleky.gov/APCD/growmore](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/APCD/growmore).

**DON'T BAG THOSE CLIPPINGS!** A common misconception is that clippings left on the lawn will promote thatch buildup. This is not true. Clippings do not make significant contributions to thatch and should be returned to the lawn whenever possible. Leaves and grass contain mostly water and break down rapidly, releasing nutrients back into the soil.

**MULCH LEAVES INTO YOUR LAWN!** Mowing tree leaves in the autumn and returning them to the turf system is an outstanding alternative to raking and bagging. Studies have shown the positive effects of mowing tree leaves into lawns. To do this, take the grass catcher off your mower and mow over the leaves on your lawn. You want to reduce your leaves to dime-size pieces. You'll know you're done when about half an inch of grass can be seen through the mulched leaf layer.

**AND ONE LAST TIP!** Before mowing your lawn, trim your shrubs and clean your flower beds and landscaping. Place the trimmings on your lawn and cut your grass like normal. You may need to do a couple of passes over the extra materials, but when complete, you will never know they were there. Plus, you saved time and money by not bagging. To avoid hazards while mowing, make sure trimmings are no larger than a pencil.

**For more information, visit [www.lelelouisville.com](http://www.lelelouisville.com) or call MetroCall at 311.**

\* Michigan State University Turfgrass Science program and Scott's Miracle-Gro



**AS MOWING HEIGHT DECREASES, DEPTH OF ROOTING DECREASES AND MAINTENANCE INCREASES.**

