

Recycling Yard Waste

Single Family Homes Must Recycle; Townhomes Exempt Through 2009

Article based on information furnished by Fairfax County and by Trash Away

Yard waste recycling is important for Fairfax County's environment because it reduces the amount of material destined for disposal while providing soil-improving properties to lawns and gardens. *In general*, the County requires all single-family homes and most townhouses to recycle yard waste (leaves, grass, and brush) from March through December. Yard waste includes leaves, grass, and brush (shrubs, prunings, twigs, and plants) from regular household lawn and garden care.

The County has an alternative yard waste program that allows townhome communities to apply for an exemption from yard waste recycling requirements. The County then reviews such applications and periodically exempts some townhome communities from yard waste recycling if they determine that the townhome lots are small and do not produce significant yard waste in their community. The Pinecrest applied in Spring 2008 for an exemption for our townhomes, and the County granted our townhomes an exemption from recycling of yard waste. The exemption is valid for two years, namely through December 2009. Thus, The Pinecrest will resubmit its request and the County will re-evaluate our townhomes' exemption every two years.

The County has no comparable process that would enable The Pinecrest to request an exemption for our single-family detached homes, therefore residents of these homes must recycle yard waste. Effective immediately on Mondays from March through December, Trash Away will pick up recyclable yard waste from our homes on Shetland Green, Highland Green, and Gretna Green.

Leaves and grass must be placed curbside separately in a clear plastic bag weighing no more than 50 pounds per bag. Brush (shrubs, prunings, twigs, and plants) must be placed in a separate container or in bundles weighing no more than 50 pounds each. Bundled brush, such as tree limbs, must be cut to a length of less than 4 feet long and bundled with rope or twine. Trash Away will collect no more than 20 bags and/or bundles of recyclable yard waste per home.

Trash Away's collection of recyclable yard waste does not include: tree stumps, poisonous plants, dirt, rocks, stones, concrete, sand, insect nests or hives, or wood or lumber from decks, fences, etc. In addition, limbs that are larger than 6 inches in diameter and 4 feet in length will not be collected.