

# Improper Disposal of Yard Waste Can Put You Out of Business!



Residents and businesses are becoming more and more aware of the impact improper disposal of yard waste has on their landscape, wallet, and local lakes, rivers, streams, and creeks. As their lawn care company, clients may be asking you to leave their yard waste on the lawn, and if you don't, you may need to look for business elsewhere.

## Improve your client's landscape with less work

Grass clippings and leaves are truly a valuable natural resource. Grass clippings left on the lawn will provide up to 25% of your lawn's total fertilizer needs, and leaves contain 50 to 80% of the nutrients a plant extracts from the soil and air during the season. To keep these nutrients where they will nourish the lawn, mulch grass clippings and leaves and leave them on the lawn or compost them.

## Save your clients money

During the year, at least 20% of the solid waste generated by Texans comes from grass clippings, tree leaves, and other yard waste. Bagging these materials and placing them into the curbside garbage collection system uses valuable landfill space and costs residents more in increased taxes and service fees.

A storm drain may become clogged if grass clippings and/or leaves are swept or blown into the drain. Clogged storm drains may cause flooding and require that City staff clean the drain. Would your clients prefer to have their tax dollars spent on cleaning out a storm drain or fixing a pothole in the street?

By leaving grass clippings and fallen tree leaves on the lawn, you are supplying it with natural fertilizers, meaning your clients spend less money on fertilizer application and you also save money, time, and energy.

## Be environmentally-friendly

When yard waste such as grass clippings, fallen leaves, bush trimmings, yard and garden debris and brush get blown into the streets as a result of landscape maintenance, they are eventually washed into the storm drain system during the first rain event. This **significantly** impacts the quality of the water because unlike sanitary sewers, anything dumped into the storm drain system flows directly into the nearest lake, stream, creek or river without any treatment to remove contaminants. Also, organic materials such as grass clippings deplete the oxygen level in the water, which is harmful to aquatic life. Improperly applied chemical fertilizers, as well as organic amendments, used on the lawn also wash down the storm drain and negatively impact aquatic life, so by helping your clients use their yard waste as a natural fertilizer, you can help reduce stormwater pollution.

## Properly Dispose of Yard Waste

- Don't sweep or blow yard waste into the street or sidewalk.
- Don't dump yard waste into the inlets, storm drains or on creek banks.
- Use fertilizers and pesticides as directed on the product label and dispose of empty containers properly. Don't pour leftover pesticides on the pavement, inlet or storm drain.
- Rake yard waste into paper yard bags or personal containers and drop them off for composting at Texarkana Water Utilities composting site, or set them out by the curb to be picked up by Waste Management for recycling.

When your clients ask you to leave the yard waste on the lawn, be prepared. Here's what you should do:

- Remove yard waste from the streets, sidewalks, and driveways. Blow or sweep grass clippings or tree leaves back up into the yard where they can help provide additional nutrients to the lawn.
- Use grass clippings or fallen leaves as mulch or shred them and use them to fertilize the lawn and protect landscape plants from extreme weather. Mulching mowers and blades make this easy. (Be sure to clean up any yard waste that gets into the street).
- If the clients have a compost bin, add the yard waste to that bin.

For more information, contact the  
City of Texarkana, Texas Stormwater Management  
903.798.3948 | [www.ci.texarkana.tx.us](http://www.ci.texarkana.tx.us)