Recycle your yard waste

Grass clippings, leaves and plant prunings are a valuable source of mulch and nutrients for lawns and gardens, but are pollutants when washed directly into storm drains and surface waters.

Many gardeners know the value of composting yard waste. Compost provides a slow, steady release of nutrients. It also builds soil organic matter, which improves soil fertility and moisture holding capacity.

☐ To be successful, composting does require the right materials, ingredients and methods. The location of a compost pile in your yard is also important. Do not locate a compost pile near a storm drain, surface water or drinking water well.

☐ Your town may offer a program where residents can bring leaves and grass clippings to the transfer station free of charge. These materials are composted and residents are allowed to pick up finished compost for home use. Contact your town to find out if they have a program.

While a valuable soil amendment and mulch for lawns and gardens, yard waste is a pollutant when washed directly into storm drains and surface waters. Recycle these valuable nutrients on the spot and reduce/eliminate the need for fertilizers and supplemental irrigation. This also reduces the amount of solid waste going to the landfill.
Yard waste can be handled in other ways. Do you find yourself disposing of leaves, grass clippings and brush while buying mulch?

With a mulching lawn mower, grass clippings and leaves can be chopped and left on the lawn, serving as a source of slow-release nutrients and building soil organic matter. Most standard lawn mowers can be retrofitted with a mulching blade kit.

Leaves and grass clippings can also be raked and used as mulch in gardens and beds. Mulch is valuable in conserving soil moisture, regulating soil temperature, suppressing weeds, and building soil organic matter. If you have trees, limbs, and brush, you can rent a wood chipper and use the finished product as mulch or as a material for walkways and parking and recreational areas.

For more information:

The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corp
www.rirrc.org
(401) 942-1430 x 775
Information and educational materials on home and garden recycling

URI Master Gardener Hotline:
1 (800) 448-1011 (M-Th, 9AM to 2 PM)
Call to get your gardening questions answered

URI Home*A*Syst Program
web.uri.edu/safewater
(401) 874-5398
Information on protecting your drinking water