

Monroe County residents will be hearing a great deal about organic waste in the near future, as the county continues the development of an Organics Management Plan. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines **organic waste** as *“the remains, residues or waste products of any organism that are recovered resources from solid waste disposal; including, but not limited to, food residuals, yard debris, and wood and plant products.”*

With leaves, brush and yard waste in abundance, fall is the right time of the year to talk about the management of this category of organics.

Municipalities throughout Monroe County offer services to assist residents in the management of yard waste. These may include curbside pickup, drop off at a central site, or management by an outside company.

In 2023, over 150,000 tons of yard waste was collected throughout Monroe County!

You can find your Town or Village program at this link: <https://www.monroecounty.gov/des-environmentalrecycling>

Why is it important to manage yard waste?

In Monroe County, yard waste is prohibited from being disposed in a landfill. Sticks, branches, brush, grass and leaves take up valuable landfill space. Additionally, this is not the best, highest use of these materials – leaves and grass can be composted and wood debris can be chipped and used for mulch.

Helpful fall hints:

- **Skip raking and bagging and chop or mow-mulch leaves with your mower and leave them on the lawn.** When these little pieces of leaves decompose, they break down into natural mulch, which suppresses weeds and provides nutrients.
- **Leaves also are the foundation of any compost pile** – mix leaves with “green” materials, such as grass clippings, place in a pile, and keep moist – and you’ll have ready-made compost for gardening in the Spring.
- If you are looking to add compost to gardens or lawns in the fall, **don’t forget – compost made from Monroe County leaves is available to Monroe County residents twice a week, every week - FREE - at the Monroe County / WM ecopark.** Bring your own container and a shovel!