

Waste Diversion Update

Spring 2024



REGIONAL DISTRICT NORTH OKANAGAN

One Region, One Future

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SPRING CLEANUP

MORE OPTIONS FOR YARD & GARDEN WASTE

Keeping plant material from our yard and gardens out of the garbage is very important! It conserves valuable landfill capacity, recovers valuable resources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. While the great majority of yard waste is not landfilled, a recent waste composition study at the Greater Vernon Diversion and Disposal Facility (landfill) during the busy Spring and Fall yard cleanup seasons, still found over 9% of total waste to be yard and garden waste!



More options to divert Yard & Garden Waste, with extended drop off hours in April at GVDDF.

Spring is a prime time to appreciate the cycle of life where nothing should go to waste. Small plant trimmings, grass and leaves can be an excellent source of free fertilizer and carbon for our soils to nourish our gardens. This material helps soils retain water which is vital during the hot and dry summer days to come. If you compost food scraps at home, leaves are a vital resource for balancing nutrients in your bin to minimize odors and to prevent the attraction of pests.

For extra material that can't be mulched or composted at home, the Yard & Garden Waste Drop Off at RDNO Diversion & Disposal Facilities is a great option.

This April, extended hours are being offered on a trial basis at the Yard & Garden Drop Off at Greater Vernon Diversion & Disposal Facility (GVDDF). On **Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from April 4th to 27th**, the **GVDDF Yard and Garden Waste Drop Off will be open until 7:30 PM**. These extended hours will provide residents with additional flexibility and options to manage their Yard & Garden Waste.

Yard & Garden Waste dropped off at GVDDF is used to make RDNO-Gro compost which is a free compost available to RDNO residents. RDNO-Gro provides many benefits including preventing soil erosion and retaining water and nutrients. For more information on Free Yard & Garden Waste Drop-off, links to municipal collection programs and sustainable yard tips go to: www.rdno.ca/compost.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY SPOTLIGHT

ELECTRIC OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT

A priority at the RDNO is to make residents aware that many of the products they buy are supported by Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Programs. EPR is a policy approach that makes industry responsible for the products they produce and sell including the collection and recycling of products at the end of their useful life. When you buy an EPR product you often pay an environmental handling fee or advance disposal fee which is charged at the time of purchase. This fee goes to the stewardship agency that represents industry and is responsible for collecting and recycling your product at no further cost once you are done with it.

Collection sites for EPR programs are often conveniently located in communities where most residents live work and shop. These can include bottle depots and sometimes participating retailers. A great way to save time and recycle is to pair recycling with your shopping trips. Find locations to recycle EPR products at: www.rdno.ca/whatgoeswhere.

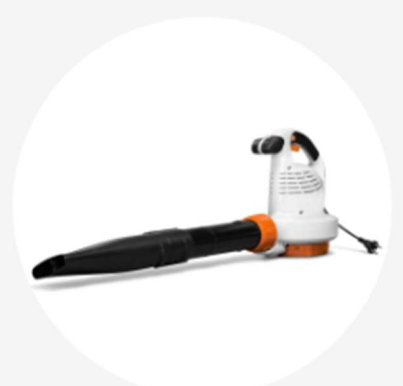
With the spring yard care season upon us, it important to keep in mind the program for electric outdoor power equipment administered by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute Canada (OPEIC). This program operates a wide range of electrical and battery-operated products including chain saws, trimmers, lawn mowers, snow blowers, pressure washers with wheels and even lawn tractors.



Lawn Mowers



Chain Saws



Blowers / Vacuums

A few examples of electrical power equipment that can be recycled through the OPEIC program. For a full list of items accepted and drop off locations, go to: <https://www.opec.ca/recycle-outdoor-power-equipment>

With so many of these products containing batteries it is important to ensure these products get recycled responsibly. Batteries do not belong in curbside garbage or recycling bins as they pose a substantial fire risk in collection vehicles and at waste management facilities. Also, batteries contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals and recycling them responsibly prevents the risk of soil contamination and water pollution. When recycled, the raw materials can be recovered and recycled into new products, reducing the environmental impacts of having to extract new raw materials.

The best option to minimizing your environmental impact with electrical outdoor power equipment is to reduce and reuse. Buying only what you need, seeking durable quality products that last, borrowing/sharing products with your friends and family, and taking care of your products will all save you money and time from having to purchase more outdoor power equipment. It will also conserve the resources extracted and used to produce outdoor power equipment. A couple of key

ways to prolong the life of rechargeable battery products for your equipment is to not leave them plugged in to charge longer than needed and also avoid storing them for long periods of time with little or no charge. Ideally when storing rechargeable battery products for longer periods of time, try to keep the charge at about 50% and check every 3 months to make sure they haven't lost their charge.

The OPEIC program accepts all corded and battery-powered electric outdoor power equipment; gas powered equipment is not included in the program. For gas-powered outdoor equipment that has reached the end of its life, such as lawnmowers, trimmers and chainsaws, make sure all gas and oil are removed (there are EPR programs for gas and oil). Once emptied of fluids, gas powered outdoor power equipment that are mostly metal by weight are accepted at RDNO Diversion & Disposal Facilities for scrap metal recycling for a fee. Find drop off options for a wide range of items including various electronic and battery operated items and gas and oil products at: www.rdno.ca/whatgoeswhere.



An important component to recycle with your outdoor power equipment is the battery. Maintain the life of your batteries by storing them with a partial charge.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT PROBLEM OF WASTE

THE POWER OF REDUCE AND REUSE

Recycling and composting can help us feel good that we've made the right decision to reduce waste. These actions are certainly better than sending more materials to landfills, they conserve landfill space, reduce pollution and recover valued raw materials. However, recycling and composting have limitations in addressing the core problems of waste and its impacts on the environment. The first two R's (reduce and reuse) are applications that are far more effective at getting to the root of these issues.

When we recycle or compost, we are often using energy and may be losing some value in the product, especially if that product can still be used. For instance, collection, transport, processing and redistribution of materials uses substantial energy. Also, when we recycle something, it is often broken down into raw materials that often have little resemblance to the product we are recycling. More energy is then required to produce new products and the new products are often not made of 100% recycled materials so more natural resources need to be extracted for new products. Keeping products in circulation longer and getting as much use and value as possible before recycling and composting conserves more resources and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



By composting a whole apple with a bruise, we are wasting the remaining good parts of that apple. Yes it can make compost but many more resources are needed to bring this food to our plates.

The first R (reduce) is about much more than reducing waste. Everything we buy comes from somewhere and with that comes all the impacts and



Why buy and keep certain items unused 99% of the time when you can rent? The sharing economy reduces waste, conserves resources and saves us money and space!

resources that resulted in producing that product. There are also often other resources extracted and used for packaging, shipping and storing new products. By choosing the first R to reduce unnecessary purchases you are also reducing the demand on all these impacts and resources. Simple ways to reduce include, asking yourself before you buy “do I really need this?” or taking inventory and making a list before grocery shopping to avoid unnecessary purchases. It can also simply involve choosing products without packaging. The power of the second R (reuse) is that we continue to use products we have or already in circulation, which greatly reduces energy consumption and conserves resources.

more sustainably. Think of how often the average car sits parked, a tuxedo or gown stays in a closet, or a tool is packed away in a shed. Share or rental services provide the value of access over the burden of ownership. Customers that choose these services are not only reducing waste and conserving resources, but they are also contributing to the development of a local circular economy, which small and local business can play a critical role in.

The first two R’s can also help us shift from a wasteful and disposable economy to a more sustainable circular economy. Secondhand stores are popular examples but there are many business models that keep products in circulation longer. For instance, refill and bulk stores are becoming increasingly popular and help avoid excess packaging. Repairing clothing or electronics helps us reduce unnecessary purchases and reuse what we already have. Sharing or renting is also a growing trend that uses resources



Refill and bulk stores help us avoid packaging.

The next time you are looking to recycle or compost is a great opportunity to question if there is a better way. Waste and sustainability decisions start with every purchase decision and continue with how we use what we already have. You may just find there are some added benefits of saving money, supporting local businesses participating in the circular economy and freeing up time and space for more important things. Wouldn't you rather live life doing stuff, rather living a cycle of buying and disposing of stuff?