



## CONCORD PUBLIC WORKS YARD WASTE COMPOSTING PROGRAM

*In response to recent inquiries as to the quality control and assurance of compost offered to our community, Concord Public Works has taken time to reach out to a third-party consultant as well as the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to assess our current operations. We have affirmed that Concord's operations and housekeeping practices at the 755 Walden Street compost site conform to industry best practices and regulatory guidelines. Based on decades of experience and oversight, regulators have determined that while the quality of residential yard waste and the resultant compost may vary, this material does not warrant formal analytical testing. In fact, as long as the materials collected and operations performed are managed in accordance with the MassDEP 'Leaf and Yard Waste Composting Guidance Document' best practices, composting operations are cautioned against performing random testing, as there is no feasible way in which a truly representative sample can be identified.*

### Program Overview

Composting is a vital part of Concord's and the Commonwealth's waste reduction and recycling strategy. Composting is a waste management option that utilizes the natural process of biological decomposition to reduce the volume of organic matter to produce a useful soil amendment. Concord has been composting residential yard waste at the 755 Walden Street site since October 1988. This was ahead of the MassDEP Solid Waste Management Facility Regulations updates (310 CMR 19.00) banning the disposal (in landfills and incinerators) of leaves in 1991 and other yard waste in 1992.

The Town operates the yard waste composting operation at 755 Walden Street in accordance with industry standard best management practices using "low-level" technology, as outlined in the MassDEP Leaf and Yard Waste Composting Guidance Document. This approach is utilized by municipalities across the Commonwealth and the country. This approach balances operational efficiency, time, space and cost effectiveness better than alternative higher level technology approaches for leaf composting operations.

Yard waste recycling is an important environmentally sustainable practice that keeps these organic materials out of landfills, which in turn:

- enhances the longevity of existing landfills
- helps residents manage yard waste
- produces a beneficial, compost material, which improves the productive potential and condition of soils
- conserves natural resources
- reduces the need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides
- reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
- saves the community money by reducing waste hauling and disposal costs

As stated above, the Town accepts plant-based materials (such as leaves and grass) from residents and municipal properties to produce compost. The Town does not accept any materials from contractors/landscapers at this facility and does not combine street sweepings or wood chips with the yard waste compost.



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To provide the highest quality compost possible, we rely on our residents to be diligent in keeping non-plant matter out of the materials they drop off for composting. The Town recognizes that the plant material dropped off for composting differs from household to household and among seasons. This means that the composition of the compost can vary throughout the year.

Municipal yard waste recycling is an environmentally friendly, safe, and sustainable practice encouraged by both the US EPA and MassDEP, providing many benefits to residents and the Town. The Concord Yard Waste Recycling Facility operates in accordance with State guidelines and is recognized as a well-organized operation that generates a high-quality compost that is excellent for home use. The Town is enthusiastic in helping the community meet our sustainability goals and assisting homeowners by providing screened and processed compost. Please be advised that while the Town does not analyze the compost, based on the source material, leaf and yard waste compost has been found by the MassDEP to be a safe and valuable soil amendment.

For more information on the benefits of composting, please visit <https://concordma.gov/yardwaste>