

Don't Trash Your Pumpkins

(There's a hidden resource inside all that goop.)

Wondering what to do with your mushy pumpkins and old jack-o-lanterns? You have three options:

1. Place in your home compost.
2. Dispose of in the Village organics collection (brown) bins.
3. Bag in yard waste bags and set at the curb.

Yard waste bags are collected through November by Shorewood DPW. Remember to follow the 30 lb.-limit per bag and simply leave the bags near the street. This method of disposal is much preferred to leaving them loose on the curb, where they can rot and/or disrupt the annual leaf collection vacuums. Bagging them also reduces the amount of labor needed by DPW staff—imagine picking up all the hundreds of curbside pumpkins in Shorewood one by one! Whatever you do, please keep them out of the trash. Organic waste rotting in landfills is a huge contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in our country, which is one reason why Wisconsin outlawed the landfilling of yard trimmings in the early 1990s. Moreover, pumpkins are heavy, and keeping them out of the landfill stream saves tax dollars by reducing the weights tipped at landfills, which charge more per ton than compost facilities. Bagging or composting helps avoid adding thousands of pounds of pumpkins to the landfill waste stream. It's the right thing to do on many fronts: environmentally, fiscally, and logistically.



Compost and other soil amendments made from collected municipal yard waste—including pumpkins—is a valuable and smart form of recycling. Unlike traditional recycling programs, which are subject to global commodity prices and vast supply chains, both the processing of yard waste “recycling” and the product involve essentially local economies. Composting yard waste and other organic waste from households, such as seasonal pumpkins and gourds, is a great way of keeping the nutrient cycle as local as possible.