

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO AT HOME TO PREVENT WATER POLLUTION?

- Pesticides, herbicides, and even fertilizers that many homeowners use in their gardens can leach chemicals into the water supply. Be careful about your placement of chemical products. Don't put them on paved areas or in the path of stormwater runoff water.
- Four inches of mulching can reduce or eliminate the need to water and weed in your gardens.



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Mulching your garden will reduce weeds and retain moisture. This will help your garden flourish and reduce the need for chemical products.

- After mowing, spread the grass clippings across the freshly mowed grass. They will help retain moisture in your lawn. Alternatively, put the clippings into a compost pile.
- Grow native grasses on your lawn and in your gardens. They require less fertilizer, pesticides, and water than non-native grass species.



Our Mission

To Protect and Enhance the Natural Resources of Chemung County by:

"Developing partnerships and networks and by implementing innovative solutions to our Natural Resource Concerns."

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A GUIDE TO ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT



www.richmondhill.ca

RESIDENTIAL ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

WHAT IS ORGANIC WASTE?

Organic waste is defined as waste that comes from plant and animal sources and can be broken down by living organisms. Here is a list of the organic waste you may deal with.

- Leaves
- Grass Clippings
- Garden Waste
- Brush
- Food Waste
- Yard Waste
- Manure
- Christmas Trees

WHY DOES ORGANIC WASTE POSE A PROBLEM?

When organic waste is improperly handled, it can damage the natural environment and harm the municipal water supply. One example of this is when organic waste is dumped into a body of water, such as a river, stream, or creek. The nutrients from the organic waste enter the water, changing its nutrient content. This allows more plants and algae to grow in the water. When these plants and algae die, it further increases that amount of organic waste in the water. The excess organic waste lowers the level of oxygen in the water, a process called **eutrophication**. The water becomes polluted and unhealthy, making it difficult to purify for drinking. The lack of oxygen in water also harms plants and animals in the ecosystem. Water pollution can also occur when homeowners leave organic waste on the curb or paved surface for a long period of time. When it rains, the water runs past this organic waste. The nutrients from the waste leach into the moving water, changing the nutrient content of the water.

WHAT DOES THE PROBLEM LOOK LIKE?



Photo courtesy of Mark Watts

Though it may seem like a good idea to return organic waste to a natural environment like a stream or river, it can be detrimental to the ecosystem and water supply. In fact, throwing organic waste onto a stream, creek, or river bank causes water pollution. Waste like the brush and leaves in these photos should be handled responsibly through composting, independent contracting, or using a municipal program. Read on for details on responsible organic waste management.



Photo courtesy of Mark Watts

HOW CAN I RESPONSIBLY HANDLE ORGANIC WASTE?

Backyard composting

This is an easy sustainable solution to organic waste management issues – simply buy a bin for your yard, check out our composting instruction manual, and get started. You'll end up with a great amendment to soil that will make your garden and house plots flourish. Once your bin is set up, maintaining the compost pile is almost no work!



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If your municipality offers organic waste pick-up, check if you need to bag waste or not.

Municipal organic waste pick-up

Some municipalities provide organic waste pick-up a few weeks each year. Do your research to find out what weeks of the year your municipality picks up

organics. Be careful not to leave organics out at times when there is no pick-up, as nutrient runoff from leaves or brush can harm water sources.

Drop-off at a municipal site

Some municipalities provide a drop-off site for organic waste. Some also leave the finished compost out for residents to take home. Other nearby municipalities may accept organic waste from your municipality.