

AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Department of Environmental Conservation

GRASS, LEAVES, AND WOOD



Leaf & yard debris and clean wood are banned from the trash.

What is leaf and yard debris?

- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Weeds
- Brush less than 1 inch in diameter



What is clean wood?

- Natural wood like logs and branches greater than 1 inch in diameter
- Stumps and roots
- Lumber (including pallets) that has never been painted, stained, or treated



Can I move brush and wood off my property now that Emerald Ash Borer is in Vermont?

- If you are **inside** the [infested area](http://vtanr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=cfd0132d1464b7b9103e3d7806f0cc5) (<http://vtanr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/PublicInformation/index.html?appid=cfd0132d1464b7b9103e3d7806f0cc5>), don't move ash wood, including branches

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chipped or ground ash material out of the infested area. Some compost facilities accept chipped ash wood.

- If you are **outside** of the infested area, it is okay to move ash wood.
- View the current map of the infested area and learn more about the Emerald Ash Borer at [VTinvasives.org](https://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont) (<https://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont>).

UNIVERSAL RECYCLING LAW (ACT 148) | **ORGANICS**

Universal Recycling Leaf, Yard, and Clean Wood Debris Guide

This guide outlines requirements and recommendations for the collection and management of leaf, yard, and clean wood debris in accordance with Vermont laws, including Universal Recycling (Act 148 of 2012), Architectural Waste Recycling (Act 175 of 2014), and Burning wood within municipality (Act 244 of 1971; 10 V.S.A. § 565), as well as the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Solid Waste Program rules and Air Pollution Control Regulations.

Facilities and Haulers: Options for Managing Leaf, Yard and Clean Wood Debris							
Material	Management options						
	Reuse/ Recycle	Agricultural/ landscaping (mulch, animal bedding)	Compost	Energy recovery (heat, power)	Categorical disposal/ bury	Open burning	Landfill (Residential trash; Alternative Daily Cover)
Leaf and Yard Debris:							
Leaves, grass clippings	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a	NO ¹	NO	NO
Brush <1" thick	n/a	Yes	Yes	Not preferred	NO ¹	NO	NO
Clean Wood Debris:							
Limbs & brush >1" thick	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not preferred ¹	Not preferred ¹	NO
Stumps & roots	n/a	Yes	Yes	n/a	Not preferred ¹	Not preferred ¹	
Clean lumber (untreated)	Yes ²	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not preferred ²	Not preferred ²	

What should I do with my...?

Leaves, grass, and brush?

- **Compost at home:** Compost needs carbon-rich “browns” in addition to “greens” (food scraps). Dried leaves and grass provide the perfect carbon source to keep your backyard compost balanced and odor-free. Learn more on our [compost page](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/organic-materials) (<https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/organic-materials>).
- **Make a brush pile:** If you have space on your property and want to enhance its value as wildlife habitat, stack your debris into a strategic pile. Wildlife ranging from birds to small mammals and from snakes to butterflies use brush piles as shelter during harsh weather or as foraging sites and caches. [Learn more about building your own brush pile](http://content.yardmap.org/learn/brushpiles/) (<http://content.yardmap.org/learn/brushpiles/>) from the Habitat Network.

- **Drop-off at a compost facility:** Some compost facilities accept leaf and yard debris in addition to food scraps. Find a facility near you on our [Materials Management Map \(http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/organics/default.html\)](http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/organics/default.html). Click on the green apple cores to see what each compost facility accepts.
- **Drop-off at a waste facility:** All transfer stations and “fast trash” haulers that accept trash must also accept leaf and yard debris between April 1 and December 15.

Invasive plant species?

Because small piles rarely get hot enough, backyard composting invasive plants, such as Japanese Knotweed, might not kill the plants. Instead, **kill invasive species on-site by methods such as solarization or desiccation** (techniques are species specific—learn more at [VTinvasives.org \(https://vtinvasives.org/land/management/\)](https://vtinvasives.org/land/management/)). **Leave the dead plant material on-site if possible.**

If you need to move the material off-site, ideally kill the invasive species, including seeds and other reproductive parts, and then:

- Compost facilities and transfer stations may accept invasive species material; **ask your [local waste district or town \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts/\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts/) if there is a place to drop off the material near you.** Do not drop off invasive species material without permission. Even composters that accept some species may want to be aware of what they take in so they can manage the material properly.
- If local facilities will not accept the invasive species material and it cannot be managed on-site, invasive species material may be put in the trash as a last resort. Double-bag it if you are not sure if it is completely dead or if there might be flowers or seeds attached. If you need to dispose of a large quantity of invasive species, please contact the landfill directly for instructions.

Have questions? Learn more at [VTinvasives.org \(https://vtinvasives.org/\)](https://vtinvasives.org/) or [contact the VTinvasives team \(https://vtinvasives.org/contact\)](https://vtinvasives.org/contact). For composting questions, explore our [food scraps webpage \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/organic-materials\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/organic-materials) or call 802-828-1138.

Diseased garden plants?

- **Bury** diseased plant material **away from your garden.** Backyard compost piles usually do not get hot enough to kill the diseases, so backyard composting is not recommended.
- **Some** compost facilities and leaf and yard **drop-offs accept diseased plants.** Ask [your local waste district or town \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts/\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts/) for drop-off options near

- Diseased plants may be put in the trash as a last resort.

[Learn more about disease prevention in home gardens \(https://extension2.missouri.edu/g6202/\)](https://extension2.missouri.edu/g6202/) from University of Missouri Extension.

Larger pieces of wood, stumps, and roots?

- **Leave onsite:** Downed woody debris provides important habitat for animals. [Learn why \(http://content.yardmap.org/learn/logs/\)](http://content.yardmap.org/learn/logs/) fallen logs and other wood are important wildlife habitat features from the Habitat Network.
- **Build with it:** Let your creativity loose and create benches, walkways, planters, trellises, or other [structures for your garden \(http://www.woohome.com/garden-2/19-amazing-diy-tree-log-projects-garden\)](http://www.woohome.com/garden-2/19-amazing-diy-tree-log-projects-garden).
- **Give it away:** But make sure not to transport ash wood if you're within the infected area! See the Emerald Ash Borer instructions above.
- **Bring to your local Stump Dump:** check with your [Waste District or Town \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts) if you need assistance.

Clean lumber?

- **Repurpose or Give Away:** If you can't use it at home, check your [Waste District or Town \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts) for local reuse options.
- **Burn:** In your wood stove or backyard campfire (but it's illegal and toxic to burn treated/painted wood).
- **Drop-off at a waste facility:** Transfer stations and "fast trash" haulers are not required to collect clean lumber, but many do. Check with your local facilities.
- Learn about local options from your [Waste District or town \(/waste-management/solid/local-districts/\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts/) or find a waste facility near you with our materials management map. Zoom in on your region and click on the recycling symbols to see what is accepted by each facility.

Treated wood?

- **Re-purpose or Give Away:** If you can't use it at home, check your [Waste District or Town \(https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts\)](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/local-districts) for local reuse options.
- If you can't find a use for it, in most instances, plywood, oriented strand board, pressure-

Learn more from our [Treated Wood Fact Sheet](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/ead/documents/FactSheets/woodwaste_fs.pdf) (https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/ead/documents/FactSheets/woodwaste_fs.pdf). To learn more about disposal of architectural wood waste, go to the [Construction and Demolition Waste page](https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/construction-waste) (<https://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/construction-waste>).

- **Burning treated wood is illegal** and could create toxic fumes.

Resources

1. [Leaf, Yard and Clean Wood Debris Guide](#)
([/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Universal-Recycling/Leaf.Yard_CleanWoodGuide.CURRENT.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Universal-Recycling/Leaf.Yard_CleanWoodGuide.CURRENT.pdf))
2. [Slow the Spread of Emerald Ash Borer: For Facilities](#)
(<https://vtinvasives.org/sites/default/files/documents/pests/SlowSpreadDisposalFINAL.pdf>)
3. [Emerald Ash Borer Poster for Facilities](#)
([/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/EAB-Solid-Waste-Facilities-Poster.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/EAB-Solid-Waste-Facilities-Poster.pdf))
4. [Compost Operations Accepting Woodchips](#)
([/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Compost-Operations-Accepting-Woodchips.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wmp/SolidWaste/Documents/Compost-Operations-Accepting-Woodchips.pdf))

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