



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 30, 2015

Yard-Waste Windfall Unlikely for Middlesex County

MIDDLESEX COUNTY –Despite what appears to be an overabundance of leaves, representatives from the Middlesex County Improvement Authority’s Recycling Division are projecting an across-the-board drop-off in yard-waste collections for 2015.

Accounting for current volumes and last year’s fourth quarter totals, MCIA Recycling Manager Ed Windas indicated that Middlesex County may see a shortfall in total yard-waste collections, to the tune of approximately 1,000 tons of leaves, 1,900-tons of brush and 300 tons of grass.

“We’re seeing a decrease in grass collections because it was so dry this year,” he said. “There are also some towns that may be bringing their grass to the landfill. Lastly, we hope that some residents are adhering to our ‘Cut-and-Leave-It’ program.”

While State and County agencies have mandated leaves and brush to be disposed of through a yard-waste program, grass, in all its green glory, falls into a bit of a gray area.

This highly odorous material, while extremely regulated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, can have multiple avenues for disposal.

“Grass is not banned from landfills,” Windas said. “The reason for that is that grass in landfills basically accelerates the decomposition of the waste around it. Grass is 90 percent water so it just decomposes.”

This, however, is the more costly route between the two, he explains.

At \$33 per ton collected, the MCIA’s yard-waste program has proven itself the more economical option for taxpayers, versus the landfill disposal, which costs towns around \$69 per ton.

“Even though it might take a bit more effort, it really makes more dollars and cents to use the yard-waste program,” Windas said.

In more recent years, newer regulations have also stipulated that residents must store their leaves off of the street, positioning them between the curb and sidewalk.

“The logic behind that is when it rains, the storm water picks up leaves and clogs drains,” Windas said.

“Secondly, it can pick up whatever contaminant may be in the leaves.”

Locally, leaves, brush and grass typically make their way out to the perimeter of a property, at which point Department of Public Works staff or subcontractors haul the material to the MCIA’s yard-waste transfer site in East Brunswick or their respective municipal sites, if available.

“We encourage any resident who has questions about their town’s protocol or regulations, to contact their municipality or to browse our online recycling guide, posted on the MCIA’s website,” Windas said.

For more information on those guides, interested parties may log onto www.mciauth.com or call the MCIA’s Recycling Division at 1-800-488-6242 (MCIA).

MEDIA CONTACT: *Public Information Officer Maria Prato, 609-655-5141, mp@mciauth.com*