

SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Dalhousie in deep with organic garbage

BY BRIANNE JOHNSTON AND ANDREW GILLIS

Banana peels, fallen leaves and all your leftovers — think twice before you toss them in the nearest trash can. The Municipality of Halifax has enacted a new by-law revamping the way it disposes of garbage.

As of November 30, citizens will no longer be able to dispose compost-able material at landfill sites, or in typical garbage cans. Instead, the municipality will provide citizens with green carts for the collection of organic material.

This action, combined with previous and future initiatives, will result in a 50 per cent reduction of waste in Nova Scotia by the year 2000.

Jim Bald of the Solid Wastes Department at the Halifax Regional Municipality says present efforts are geared towards residential areas. Although, businesses and institutions are temporarily exempted, they will be forced to comply with the by-law in the future. This means that Dalhousie University will have to act in accordance with

the new ban.

Mike Murphy, manager of Environmental Services at Dalhousie, said that he has already discussed options with Food Service representatives at Dal.

"We met last week with some Food Services representatives. We visited a food composting facilities at McDonald's and the Atlantic Superstore, who are presently involved with releasing their own waste,"

Murphy said. "The plan [at Dal] is to hit the large producers first — the cafeteria, the [Student Union Building] and the residences."

However, Murphy is not as optimistic about the feasibility of a composting program for the remainder of the Dal community.

"It is difficult to control because there are so many buildings and so many lounges where anyone has the opportunity to throw an apple core [into the garbage]," Murphy said. "We also have to consider how easy [the containers] are to handle and dispose of."

But Bald says that there are economic incentives for businesses who compost organic materials.

"It now costs \$100 to dump mixed waste into landfills," he said.

"It only costs \$70 to compost organic materials."

Waste sent to a landfill site, from institutions and businesses, will be inspected routinely. If the amount of organic material in the waste exceeds 70 per cent, the waste will be brought to a composting site. Fees and charges will be applied as required. If a business is a recurring offender, the municipality will no longer accept its garbage.

Tips for Backyard Composting

-In summer months, try spraying small amounts of vinegar into your compost bin to keep the fruit-flies away.

-Carts are built to be kept outside.

-To ensure material is collected on collection day, be sure to have the cart out by 7:00 am.

Acceptable Materials for your new compost bin

Food Waste:

- Fruit and vegetable peelings
- Meat and fish (including shellfish)
- Dairy product
- Bread and pasta
- Bones

Yard Waste:

- Grass and leaves
- House and garden plant waste

Box Board:

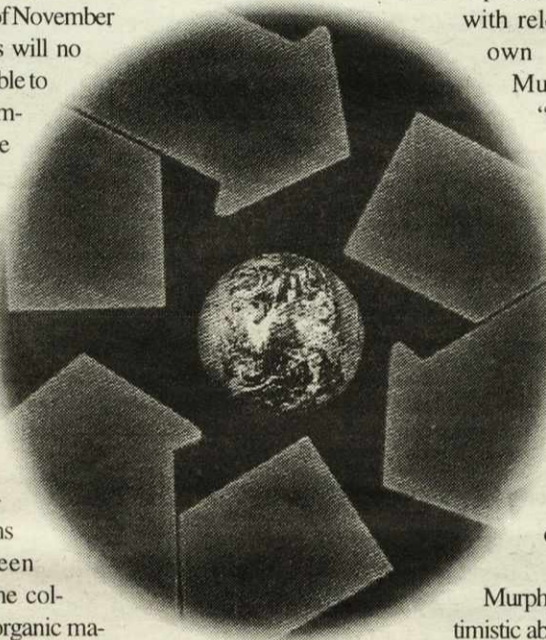
- Cereal boxes
- Toilet paper rolls

Soiled and non-recyclable paper:

- Soiled napkins
- Soiled pizza boxes
- Fast food containers
- Manilla envelopes
- Wax paper
- Wrapping paper
- Paper plates (No Styrofoam)
- Sugar and potato bags

Other:

- Sawdust and wood shavings



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