

Sustainability Newsletter

Spring 2019

Recycling Depots through the Region

As part of the updated Solid Waste Management Plan, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is committed to supporting recycling in our region. Part of that support has taken the form of operating some Recycle BC depots. In 2018, Recycle BC depots were established at both the Smithers/Telkwa Transfer Station and the Vanderhoof Transfer Station. There are currently plans in the works to have Recycle BC depots also in Fort St. James, Houston and Fraser Lake.

If you happen to live in a community that is fortunate enough to have curbside pickup, we would urge you to take advantage of that service. Some items are not able to be included, but do put out items that are part of that service.

In this issue:

- Recycling in the RDBN
- Wood ashes
- Backyard composting
- Lasagne gardening



Curbside accepted materials:

- Printed paper (newspapers, inserts, flyers, magazines, catalogues & phone books), corrugated cardboard (cardboard boxes) and other paper/packaging (household paper, envelopes, molded paper, paper bags).
- Containers such as plastics (plastic bottles, jars and jugs, plastic trays and clamshells, gardening pots and seeding trays), metal cans, aerosol cans (empty), foil wrap and take out containers along with cartons for soup, milk, etc.

Depot accepted materials:

If you don't have curbside pickup, the depot will accept all those same items for drop-off.

Additionally, they will also take:

- Glass (all non-deposit glass bottles and jars)
- Foam packaging (meat trays, take-out containers and foam cushion packaging).
- Plastic bags (for groceries, produce and newspapers) and overwrap (for diapers, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, soft drink flats).
- Other flexible plastic packaging, which includes crinkly wrappers and bags, flexible packaging with plastic seal, zipper lock and stand-up pouches, woven plastic bags and non-food protective packaging (such as bubble wrap or plastic padded envelopes).

For more info on your local depot, or clarification on accepted materials, check out RecycleBC.ca or call the RDBN and speak to the Environmental Services Department at 1-800-320-3339 or 250-692-3195.



This newsletter can be viewed online at:

www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter



The RDBN's Environmental Services Department is now on Facebook! Like us at "Sustainable RDBN"

Proper Disposal of Wood Ashes

As the weather starts to warm up, it's time to clean out our wood burning stoves! We'd like to remind you, however, not to place ashes in the garbage. The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako's transfer stations or landfills will accept ashes, but only in the designated area. Ashes generated from the cleaning of wood burning appliances can retain heat over a very long period of time. Even if you may think they are not a hazard, when mixed with garbage waste, ashes can have catastrophic results. To learn about safer and more eco-friendly methods of wood ash disposal, take a look at some of the ideas below.



Eco-friendly Ways to Dispose of Wood Ashes

Before you dispose of your ashes using any of the following methods, make sure they have been left to cool for at least 2-3 days in a metal pail or garbage can and stirred often (hot ashes will melt plastic), this will ensure that there are no remaining hot embers.

- 1. Place wood ashes in the compost bin.** Ashes are a valuable source of lime, potassium, and trace elements, which can be a great addition to your backyard compost when added in small quantities. The main component of wood ash is calcium carbonate, which increases soil alkalinity, helpful in neutralizing acidic pH levels in soil. When adding ashes to the compost bin, make sure to only sprinkle a small amount on each layer. Adding too much can ruin the mix.
- 2. Place ashes around shrubs and perennial plants as fertilizer.** Using a cup measure, spread ash evenly on the soil around plants. Rake the ash into the soil lightly. Make sure not to leave ash in piles, because if it is too concentrated in one place, excessive salt may leach into the soil, damaging plants.
- 3. Use ashes to de-ice your driveway.** Instead of using salt to melt ice on your driveway and walkways, which ends up in groundwater, try wood ashes. A generous sprinkle of ash on icy areas of your driveway will provide sufficient traction for anyone walking across the ice, with no harm to the environment or the concrete surfaces underneath. In the spring, the ashes will dry up and be blown onto your lawn and garden, helping to fertilize the soil.



When using ashes in the ways described above, be sure to follow these guidelines:

- Protect yourself when applying wood ash. Wear eye protection and gloves. Depending on the fineness of the ash, you may want to wear a dust mask.
- Do not use ash from burning trash, cardboard (if it contains glue), coal, or pressure-treated, painted or stained wood. These substances contain trace elements, harmful to many plants when applied in excessive amounts.

Backyard Composter Rebate

We're happy to announce that the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako's composting program is back! Visit your local participating retailer and receive a \$40 rebate off your purchase right there. Various styles are available, check with your local store! There are a limited amount of rebates, so don't delay. Go buy a composter today!!!!

Composters must be purchased in-store at participating retailers. Rebate forms must be filled out prior to purchase. There is a limit of one rebate per household.



If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact the RDBN! You can call us at 1-800-320-3339 or 250-692-3195 and ask for Elaine. Or email: elaine.wiebe@rdbn.bc.ca. And last but not least, check out our webpage <http://www.rdbn.bc.ca> or find us on Facebook at "Sustainable RDBN".

Participating Retailers near you:

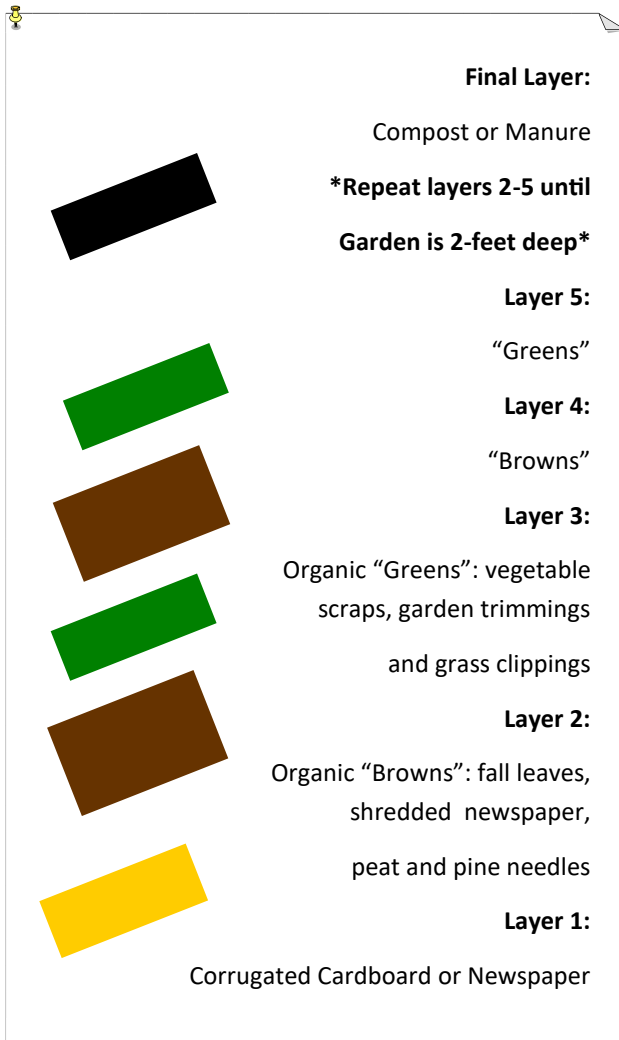
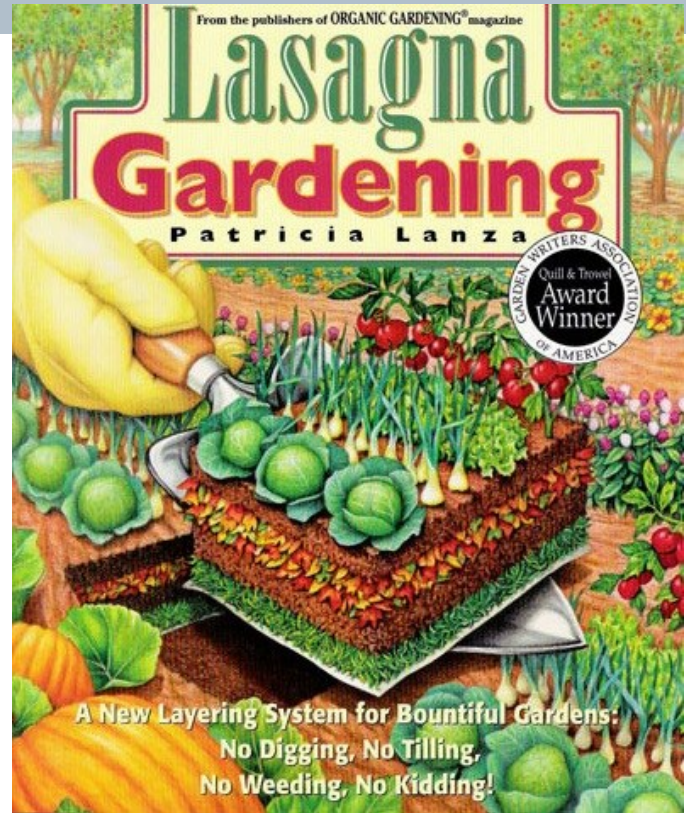
- In Burns Lake — Burns Lake Home Hardware
- In Fort St. James — Ouelette Bros. Building Supplies
- In Fraser Lake — Fraser Lake Building Supplies
- In Houston — Reitsma's Home Hardware
- In Smithers — Smithers Home Hardware
- In Vanderhoof — Taylor Bros. Home Hardware



Ideas for your garden...

The snow hasn't melted yet, but it's time to start thinking about your garden. If you are pondering starting or expanding your space, consider the idea of "lasagna gardening". This is a no-dig, no-till gardening method that results in rich, fluffy soil with very little work from the gardener. The name has nothing to do with what you'll be growing in this garden, but rather, the method of building the garden. It is essentially adding layers of organic materials that will "cook down" over time, resulting in rich, fluffy soil that will help your plants thrive.

Also known as "sheet composting", lasagna gardening is great for the environment, because you're using your yard and kitchen waste and essentially composting it in place to make a new garden. One of the best things about it is how easy it is. You don't have to remove existing sod and weeds and you just put down layer upon layer. The following materials are all perfect for lasagna gardens: grass clippings, leaves, fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves and tea bags, weeds (if they haven't gone to seed), manure, compost,



seaweed, shredded newspaper or junk mail, pine needles, spent blooms, trimmings from the garden and peat moss. The first layer consists of either brown corrugated cardboard or three layers of newspaper laid directly on top of the grass or weeds in the area you've selected for your garden. Wet this layer down to keep everything in place and start the decomposition process. The grass or weeds will break down fairly quickly because they will be smothered.

Then you'll want to alternate layers of "browns" such as fall leaves, shredded newspaper, peat and pine needles with layers of "greens" such as vegetable scraps, garden trimmings and grass clippings. In general, you want your "brown" layers to be about twice as deep as your "green" layers, but there's no need to get finicky about this. What you want at the end of your layering process is a two-foot tall layered bed. You'll be amazed at how much this will shrink down in a few short weeks.

When should you make a lasagna garden? Fall is an optimum time, but if you make it in the spring or summer, you will need to consider adding more "soil-like" amendments to the bed, such as peat or topsoil. That way, you can plant in the garden right away.

This is just the beginning of information that's out there for Lasagna Gardening. Check out your local library or bookstore for books on the topic or jump into the wealth of information that's available on the internet.