

Protect our stream valley parks with proper yard waste disposal

Non-native invasive plants are exotic weeds that threaten our parks by crowding out native plants and disrupting ecosystems. They spread quickly and are difficult to remove once established. Invasive vines like English Ivy, Mile-a-Minute, and Kudzu grow to cover anything in their path and even kill trees, while Japanese Stiltgrass takes over forest floors and suburban lawns. Significant county resources and thousands of volunteer hours are spent every year [combating invasive plants](#) in our parks.

Some county residents accidentally spread invasive plants and other weeds by dumping yard waste in neighboring forests. Dumped yard waste can smother native plants and spread invasive plants, degrading our parks and forests. Invasive plants may grow from seeds, berries, or even pieces of roots in yard waste, so improper disposal of yard waste can spread invasive plants to new areas.

Fortunately, residents like you can help prevent the spread of non-native invasive plants by properly disposing of yard waste. Yard waste may be disposed of through one or more of the methods listed at the right side of this page. →

Keep invasive plants from spreading in the environment by disposing of them with your regular trash in plastic trash bags. Use our [guide](#) to identify and control invasive plants in your yard.

As part of a Watch the Green Grow outreach project, volunteers are distributing free paper lawn bags with enclosed information cards to select residents living near stream valley parks. If you receive one of these packets, kindly let us know how you plan to use the bags by returning the enclosed response card.

Help Fairfax County prevent the spread of invasive plants in our parks by disposing of yard waste properly!

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Proper Yard Waste Disposal Methods:

- Leave grass clippings on the ground to decompose and return nutrients to the soil. [Grasscycling](#) is low effort and reduces the need for fertilizer.
- [Compost](#) and put your waste to use improving your gardens. Dumping yard waste in forests is not composting! Dumped waste is slow to break down because it does not reach the same high temperature of a compost pile.
- Put yard waste into paper lawn bags for curbside collection by your waste disposal company. Branches, no more than 4 feet long, should be tied into bundles.
- Keep pet waste and known invasive plants out of your yard waste. Yard waste is turned into [free mulch](#) for use by county residents.
- If curbside yard waste collection is not available, drop off yard waste at one of two [county facilities](#): the I-66 Transfer Station in Fairfax or the I-95 Landfill Complex in Lorton.

