



Dear Valued Partner:

The resident you provide lawn care and maintenance to has been chosen to assist with a yard waste collection pilot being conducted by the City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services.

What does this mean?

From November 4 until December 6, this family is being asked to strongly consider using the City-provided compostable, paper yard waste bags, or your personal plastic containers (no more than 32 gallons) for the collection of leaves and grass clippings.

Why only paper bags or plastic 32-gallon containers?

When we collect yard waste from your client's home, and from the homes of the other 219,000 families in Charlotte, we take it to Mecklenburg County's compost facility to be processed into mulch and compost. They don't accept leaves and grass clippings in plastic bags because it compromises the quality of the mulch and compost product; therefore, yard waste must be removed from the plastic bags before being taken to their facility. Our collection crews typically debag the leaves and grass clippings at the curb, but there are several challenges with this process that include, bags being too heavy, increasing collection costs, and crews not being able to complete routes on the same day of scheduled service.

Can you explain the challenges more?

Since fiscal year 2016, the amount of yard waste collected by Solid Waste crews has increased nearly 30 percent, creating several operational challenges for the City's yard waste collection crews. The increase in yard waste has:

- **Increased collection costs.** The current operation is being impacted by increased costs due to the use of temporary workers, workers' compensation claims, and the loss of our debagging facility. Mecklenburg County does not accept leaves in plastic bags. For several years we've been able to throw the leaves in plastic bags on the truck and take them to a facility to be debagged by temporary workers. This is costly and a poor use of your tax dollars. Also, the debagging location is on property owned by the airport and will soon be used to expand the airport runway, leaving us with no place to debag leaves. Moving to a new location and continuing to debag after collection will become cost prohibitive once we are no longer able to use the airport facility.
- **Reduced operational efficiency.** The large amounts of yard waste at the curb also increase the time that crews are at a stop. Yard waste routes are generally between 1000 and 1400 homes. This means that, on average, the crews have about one minute and 30 seconds to complete one stop. Any time over that will increase the time they are on the route, reducing operational efficiency.
- **Decreased employee morale.** Lifting heavy, overstuffed plastic bags leads to injuries. The pressure of completing all the pick-ups on time is stressful, leaving employees with poor morale. Poor employee morale has a negative impact on the operation.

We've created a video that further explains the challenges associated with our current yard waste collection system. You can view the video and an FAQ on the challenges and our proposed solution at <http://bit.ly/yardwastepilot>.

What's the solution?

After investigating several options to address the challenges, we are seriously considering one option - requiring the use of compostable paper yard waste bags for the collection of leaves and grass clippings. Before we fully implement this change, we want to test the solution to determine if it will produce the intended results of decreasing collection costs, increasing operational efficiency and improving employee morale. We also want to get feedback from our customers and partners to determine how the compostable, paper yard waste bags work for you.

What happens next?

In the next few weeks we will be delivering paper, compostable yard waste bags to homes in your client's area. We are asking that you use these bags for their leaves and grass clippings instead of plastic bags. This new collection process begins the week of November 4. Please continue to use the paper, compostable bags until December 6. We can deliver the bags directly to you if you. If you would prefer the bags in your possession, instead of getting them from the homeowner, please contact Brandi Williams using the information below before October 21.

Yard Waste Bag Delivery Contact

Brandi N. Williams
980.345.6491
bnwilliams@charlottenc.gov

Thank you in advance for your support of your client's participation in the yard waste pilot. My team and I look forward to working with you to continue to build on Charlotte's legacy as the best place for families to live, work and play in the southeast.

Yours in service,



Rodney Jamison, Interim Director
City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services