

There are many calls that come into the Public Works Office asking about yard waste and cardboard recycling. Below is information that will help residents understand why and how Belmont recycles these items.

**Why can't yard waste and cardboard go in the trash?** The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection bans both these items. This state agency established waste bans to capture more recyclables, keep toxic materials out of the environment and preserve landfill capacity.

## **Yard Waste**

**What is yard waste?** Yard waste is leaves, twigs, grass, weeds, flowers, wood chips, plants, hedge and shrub prunings 1" or less in diameter and easily raked yard waste. No tree limbs or branches greater than 1" in diameter. No food scraps, animal waste, trash of any kind, rocks, soil or plastic bags are allowed.

**What type of container should yard waste be placed in?** Yard waste should be placed in 30-gallon biodegradable paper bags or barrels with yard waste stickers affixed that are no larger than 32 gallons or 50 pounds in weight.

**When is yard waste collection?** *There is no yard waste collection from December 6, 2012 through March 31, 2013.* Otherwise, yard waste should be put out curbside by 7:00AM every other week on your recycle day from April until October and every week from late October until early December.

Residents also have the option of dropping off at the Transfer Station from the end of October to early December (exact times and dates are listed in the Collection Calendar).

**Where does Belmont's yard waste go?** It is brought to Landscape Express in Woburn.

**What does recycled yard waste become?** Yard waste is used to make compost, which improves soil by retaining moisture levels, keeping pests and disease in check, providing nutrients and is used as an alternative to chemical fertilizers.

## **Cardboard**

**What is cardboard?** In the recycling business another name for cardboard is OCC or old corrugated cardboard. Mainly it is used to make boxes that merchandise is shipped in. A cross section displays layers with a wavy middle.

**How should cardboard be recycled at the curb?** It should always be flattened and cut into pieces no larger than 3 feet by 3 feet. It can be included with other paper recycling in brown paper bags or tied with string in stacks less than 9 inches high. Cardboard should be secured (such as placing it under your recycling bin) so it doesn't blow away. Do not nest cardboard boxes inside one another.

**Why does cardboard have to be flattened and sized 3 x 3 feet?** So it will fit in the truck. Recyclables are placed in pockets in the side arm of the truck and when the arm is raised the recyclables slip into a limited opening at the top of the truck.

**When is cardboard collected?** Every other week with the rest of your recycling.

**Where does Belmont's cardboard go?** Cardboard is hauled to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Casella in Charlestown.

**What does recycled cardboard become?** New cardboard, paper bags and paper board.

**Important Facts to think about:**

Ironically, in March of 2011 a characterization study was done at Wheelabrator North Andover, the landfill where Belmont disposes its trash, and it was determined that paper was 28% and organic material was 20.4% of municipal solid waste. This is an alarming statistic since both of these materials can be recycled. Keeping cardboard, a form of paper and yard waste, a type of organic material out of the waste stream will help lower these numbers. Additionally, recycling these materials will help preserve natural resources, use less energy and save money in trash disposal fees for the Town. For residents that are recycling these materials it is greatly appreciated and for residents that can improve I hope this information will encourage you to make an effort that benefits everyone!

Mary Beth Calnan, Belmont Recycling Coordinator, can be reached at [mcalan@belmont-ma.gov](mailto:mcalan@belmont-ma.gov) or 617-993-2689.