

Best Practice

Compost Program

CONTACT

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Project Date: 1991 (ongoing)

THE PRACTICE

The Town of Shaunavon Parks Department has been composting on a small scale since 1991. The program was started out of necessity as the department lacked the equipment to haul away grass clippings and leaves from one of the larger parks so a compost pile was started. The benefits of developing a site for the community was soon realized. Issues regarding the capacity and lifespan of the landfill were starting to surface and benefits of recycling the yard wastes were recognized. Education and training was available at conferences and the expansion of the composting program seemed a reasonable undertaking that would not affect budget limitations. The town was taking a step towards a more environmental friendly practice that would give outcomes in a number of different areas in the community.

THE PROCESS

In the fall of 1993 staff attended a Municipal Composting Workshop sponsored by the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council. The workshop brought forward some very important information regarding waste reduction. This training led to a more organized structure and compost program for the community.

In April of 1994 the Waste Reduction Council held two workshops in Shaunavon regarding composting. The first workshop was for municipal staff and the second was an evening session open to the community. In 2008 the community found themselves working closely with the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council to look at ways of providing more public education to the community about composting, healthy lawn maintenance practices, and continuing to reduce compostable materials being sent to the landfill. Two community compost workshops were offered as educational tools for the general public focusing on backyard composting and grass cycling.

The Town of Shaunavon composting operates on a small budget. The town has encouraged the community to take ownership of the program by delivering garden material, grass clippings, leaves and other organic matter to the pile and in return they are welcome to take limited amounts back to their gardens and flowerbeds. As the program expanded in the 1990's, a new location was found with the goal that the composting project must remain within town limits for easy access by staff and the community.

THE RESULTS

In 2008 the town estimated our compost pile at 250 cubic yards at the end of the season, which is about average for the last 8 – 10 years. Efforts on a community level have increased personal awareness regarding recycling and composting in the community. Along with other recycling programs in the community it has enabled the town to take some very positive steps towards an environmentally sustainable community. This will be a continued, ongoing practice in the community for years to come.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Town of Shaunavon has learned that there are agencies across Saskatchewan that can assist municipalities achieve cost efficiencies and capacity building. The compost program has educated municipal staff and rate payers on the principles of achieving a sustainable community for years to come.