

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

For immediate release

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Hoosiers asked to snuff out their matches this spring

Residents to keep the air clear when cleaning up yards and gardens

Instead of burning yard waste left over from winter and spring storms, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) encourages Indiana residents to chip and compost the debris.

“Indiana’s citizens can help keep our air clean by eliminating emissions from fires,” said Thomas W. Easterly, commissioner of IDEM. “Those fires produce a large volume of fine particles and ozone-forming chemicals right where people live. Chipping and composting yard waste has the added benefit of being good for trees and lawns, as well as the air.”

Chipping branches and composting plant material is the best way to manage yard wastes. Chipped wood can be spread around trees and plants instead of purchasing mulch from a store. Leaves and plant wastes can be composted to make humus, a nutrient-rich soil amendment, which can fertilize flower beds and gardens.

Burning wet wood and plant material on the ground outside releases more smoke and harmful emissions per pound than burning dry, seasoned wood in a fireplace or wood stove.

Many communities discourage and even prohibit burning of yard waste and have local ordinances that ban fires, such as burning leaves and wood for disposal. Check with the local fire department, city or county for the type of fires allowed in your area.

More information about the hazards of burning of yard waste is available on the IDEM Web site at http://www.in.gov/idem/your_environment/air_quality/openburning For additional information about how to compost yard wastes, visit <http://www.in.gov/recycle/2841htm>

About IDEM

IDEM (<http://www.idem.IN.gov>) implements federal and state regulations regarding the environment. Through compliance assistance, incentive programs and educational outreach, the agency encourages and aids businesses and citizens in protecting Hoosiers and our environment.

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