

## WHAT IS ORGANIC WASTE?

This is material such as unmarketable fruits and vegetables, cut flowers and yard wastes. Organic waste accounts for 34% of the total ICI (Industrial, Commercial and Institutional) waste composition. This is the single largest waste stream within the ICI sector, equating to nearly 177,820 tonnes going into Calgary's landfills each year<sup>1</sup>.

## WHY IS ORGANIC WASTE A PROBLEM?

Organic waste is broken down by methane-producing anaerobic (without oxygen) bacteria leading to the production of biogas consisting of 50% CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and 50% CH<sub>4</sub> (methane) by weight. Methane gas is of concern because it is 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas<sup>2</sup>. Sanitary landfills (those that employ waste compaction, dirt covers, and final caps) cause more of the waste to decay in an anaerobic environment, leading to an even greater production of the potent greenhouse gas methane.

## BENEFITS OF ORGANIC WASTE DIVERSION

- Reduce your disposal fees
- Improve your business' public image
- Recover the nutrient value of the food as compost or animal food
- Provide food to those in need
- Help your community meet local and provincial waste reduction goals
- Sustain local industries and jobs
- Reduce your companies environmental and carbon footprint

## WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH ORGANIC WASTE

- Food that is unmarketable but still edible can be sent to organizations such as the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank;
- Pre-consumer vegetative matter, cut flowers, yard wastes, etc. can be sent to a facility for composting;
- Processed & oily foods, meat, dairy, cooked and post-consumer foods may be sent to a Class I compost facility, feedlots, etc., while certain processed foods can be sent to Product Management Corporation (please contact us for more details).

### Did you know...

In 2004, Canada's landfills produced 29 million metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>E)<sup>3</sup>.

This is the equivalent of nearly five million SUVs driving for one year (based on 20,000 km traveled each).

For more information about organics disposal please visit our [online recycling directory](#). For further questions please [email](#) Green Calgary's Commercial Environmental Services program or visit [our website](#).

1. EBA Engineering Consultants Ltd. 2006. Executive Summary: The City of Calgary ICI/C&D Waste Characterization Study Prepared for: The City of Calgary, Waste and Recycling Services.
2. Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1991 – 2001. Available at: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/downloads/2007GHGFastFacts.pdf> (Last accessed Sept. 4, 2009).
3. Trends in GHG Sources and Sinks in Canada 1990-2004. Available at: [http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/ghg/inventory\\_report/2004\\_trends/trends\\_e.cfm](http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/ghg/inventory_report/2004_trends/trends_e.cfm) (Last accessed Sept. 4, 2009).