

Kitty Litter and Dog Poop

Why we care

When thinking about what waste gets sent to the landfill, kitty litter probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. However, Portland metro area cats send about 61,000 tons of litter to Arlington for disposal each year. And it's not just a landfill issue. Most kitty litter is a clay material mined from the earth and treated with chemicals to reduce dust and odor.

Dog waste has environmental impacts as well. In the metro area an estimated 24,450 tons of dog poop is left on the ground every year. Dog waste carries bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can threaten the health of humans and wildlife. Local governments have pegged it as a significant source of bacteria in waterways.

Simple, positive change

- Look for kitty litter made of biodegradable plant material. Feline Pine (pine shavings), Naturals Clumping Litter (corn fibers), and Abound (grass seed) are available at local grocery stores.
- Spread biodegradable kitty litter onto the soil around shrubs after removing fecal material. Because cat urine can carry a parasite, litter should not go in a vegetable garden, compost pile, or the toilet.
- Better yet, train your cat to use a toilet seat for cats, such as [Kitty's Loo](#).
- For dog poop, install a mini-septic system, such as the [Doggie Dooly](#). Reportedly these systems work well if soil drainage is good and the weather doesn't go below freezing.
- Hire someone for pet waste removal, such as [Green Pet Compost Company](#). Check pet waste [services](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.