

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, Multnomah County's 356,000 cats send over 11,000 tons of litter to Arlington 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 Multnomah County an estimated 7,000 tons of dog poop is left on the ground each 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. World's Best Cat Litter (corn), Swheat Scoop (wheat), Good Mews (recycled paper pellets), and ExquisiCat Enviro-Friendly Pine Cat Litter (shredded wood) are available at grocery stores and specialty markets.
- 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 or compost pile.
- The best way to dispose of dog waste is to flush it down the toilet. Carry a pail with trowel attached when walking the dog.
- 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. See <http://www.portlandpooch.com/directory/wasteremoval/listings.htm?sort=city>.

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