

Yard Waste Disposal

Maintaining our lawns and yards means that we have tree limbs, grass, weeds, and plant cuttings to handle. For those who live on bluff lots, the temptation is to throw yard debris and lawn clippings over the bluff. Or maybe you, or your landscaper, do so now. “Why not?” you may ask, “Grass composts quickly, right?” Besides being illegal, with a hefty fine for littering in many locations, there are many other reasons that you should not dump waste over the bluff.

If you use fertilizer or other chemicals on your lawn, those chemicals will make it to the shoreline along with your clippings, killing fragile marine life. Grass without chemicals can be dangerous, too, as the excess nitrogen can raise temperatures and pose a danger to marine life.

Grass clippings dumped over your bluff do not go away, but accumulate and create weight. These clippings do not decompose quickly, since low-oxygen (anaerobic) compost piles don’t work like those that are turned and watered frequently. This dumped waste can smother the sturdy native plants that help hold the bank in place, which in turn creates sloughing and potentially cause slides. Even modest amounts of waste on the slopes can create erosion.

What should you do with your lawn clippings and yard waste? One option is to replace your lawn with native plants. If that is not an option, you can take your lawn clippings to the county Solid Waste facility, and dispose of them there. You can create a compost pile, preferably away from the bluff, which could also supply you with clean compost for your garden. Or better yet, you could use a mulching lawn mower, which cuts the grass into fine pieces and leaves them on the lawn.

If you live along the beach on a low-bluff or no-bluff location, you should also avoid dumping your clippings onto the beach. The same chemical and nitrogen problems apply.

If these options won't work, you can create your own compost pile, preferably away from the bluff, which would also supply you with compost for your garden or other yard plants. Alternatively, many counties now offer yard waste recycling for reasonable monthly fees. Check with your local Solid Waste facility to verify that you can deliver and dispose of your yard waste there, and if curbside green waste disposal options are available.

