

Dear Recycle Lady



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Can Halloween jack-o-lanterns be composted? Loves Halloween

Dear Loves Halloween,

Yes, used or cut Halloween pumpkins can be composted. Be sure to remove any candles, paint or wax that you may have used for the jack-o-lantern. Smash or chop up your pumpkin into smaller pieces as they will compost faster. Pumpkin pieces add green waste to your compost. Roasted pumpkin seeds are a healthy snack for both humans and birds as they are high in protein, fiber, and healthy fats. For complete instructions for roasting pumpkin seeds, see www.tasteofhome.com/article/roast-pumpkin-seeds/. Raw, dried, or slightly roasted pumpkin seeds can be put in a dish, feeder or mixed with suet for a healthy bird snack. Be sure there is no salt, seasoning, flavoring or candy on the seeds as they are not healthy for birds. The website, www.thespruce.com/pumpkin-seeds-for-birds-4104651, has great ideas for preparing pumpkin seeds for birds. Deer and other wildlife also like pumpkins. Just put them out in a field or lightly forested area. One word of caution: break open your pumpkins so a hungry deer won't get its head stuck inside the pumpkin! Each year, landfills around the country receive about 900,000 tons of pumpkins that add to the yearly 13 billion tons of global food waste, according to the World Economic Forum. Food waste emits a potent greenhouse gas, methane, that generates Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and contributes to climate change. Finding a sustainable way to dispose of a Halloween pumpkin is one small way we can make Halloween activities more environmentally friendly.

Did you know that the name jack o'lantern was used in the 1600s as the name for a lantern-carrying night watchman. At that time, "Jack" was a name used for a man whose name was not known, thus jack o'lantern. According to Merriam-Webster, by the 1800s, jack o'lantern meant "a carved pumpkin used as a lantern." The name may have come from ancient rituals or folk tales about lantern carrying spirits. It also may have come from young pranksters who carved scary faces into pumpkins.

Dear Recycle Lady,

What can be done with leaves? I have two truckloads of leaves and don't own a single tree! Tired of Raking Leaves

Dear Tired of Raking Leaves,

Leaves are an excellent soil fertilizer, so hopefully, some of your leaves can be mulched for your lawn with a mower. If you have a composter or compost pile, bag some of the dry leaves to use later during winter. Dry leaves are brown waste and are a good source of carbon. Some of the leaves could be raked or blown into your plant beds as a protective cover and for overwintering insects and small wildlife. Please do not rake or blow leaves into the road, curb or ditch line. They will clog drains and injection wells. If you live within the city limits of Lewisburg, bagged leaves can be put out for curbside pickup on your normal trash day. They will be picked up by the city and taken to the composting pile at the city shop located on Feamster Road. Bulk or bagged leaves may also be dropped off at the city shop Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Be sure there is no other debris or trash mixed in as the leaves will be used for compost. Sign in at the New Public Works office across from Dorie Miller Park at 396 Feamster Road prior to dumping leaves. This bulk

leaf drop-off service is not available to commercial lawn services. Call Julie Teubert at 304-645-1833, if you have questions.

Go to bat for bats: Bats are one of the best sources for natural pest control, and their habitats are disappearing. Bats roost during the day in caves, hollow trees, and old buildings. They also like bat houses that can be purchased if you have place for one. For an online education about bats, go to www.batworld.org. It has great information on bat rescue, rehab, and education. There is also a rescue network that extends to several countries, and it provides training for others as well.

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com. Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.