

Spring 2024 Newsletter | Volume 33 | No.1 | 100 Elwood Davis Road, North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312 | 315-453-2866 | OCRRA.org

Sharing Pride, Progress and Pizza at Earth Day Cleanup

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

From each corner of Onondaga County, volunteers picked up 107,380 pounds of litter in April 2023. Some residents tackled entire city blocks alone - bending, squatting, climbing, and reaching for trash with pride in their progress. Hundreds of community groups rallied, with names like the Bayberry Pickers and the Cornwall Cleanup Crew. Three groups joined forces in the Eastwood section of Syracuse to wrap up a day of cleaning with free pizza, dessert at a local ice cream shop and dozens of smiles. Joy is infectious. Now, it is time to get to work again.

OCRRA's 2024 Earth Day Cleanup will be held on Friday, April 12 and Saturday, April 13. Pick one day or both. Clear litter on your own or invite friends, coworkers or neighbors to join you. Pick a specific public location to clean (park, neighborhood, intersection). Don't forget to stock up on cleaning supplies, including gloves and tools to safely pick up litter.

Volunteers will be given special stickers for bags of litter, which must be dropped off at predetermined locations. We'll send instructions once we know exactly where you'll be cleaning up. Remember, no chemical waste, paint cans, furniture, appliances, yard waste or gas tanks are acceptable at these drop-off locations. Please contact your local highway department in advance for guidance to manage prohibited items, as they will likely be unavailable for questions over the weekend.

Registration online at www.OCRRA.org/earthday is preferred. If that is not an option, fill out and fax or mail-in the form below early enough to arrive by April 3 so OCRRA has time to prepare and share instructions.



Members of the Baldwinsville Garden Club came prepared with buckets, trash bags and litter pickers during OCRRA's 2023 Earth Day Cleanup.

Municipalities will deliver the litter collected to OCRRA to weigh and measure the impact of your local service. Over 2.9 million pounds of litter has been removed from our community and converted into electricity since the program launched in 1991. As the snow melts, more unsightly litter will be revealed. Fortunately, thousands of volunteers will roll up their sleeves again to turn frustration into action and, perhaps, an afternoon of pizza, ice cream and smiles with your neighbors.



NOTE: Online registration preferred: www.OCRRA.org/EarthDay

Alternatively, return this form by fax to (315) 453–2872 or mail to: OCRRA, 100 Elwood Davis Rd., North Syracuse, NY 13212

Number of Volunteers:

Organizer's: Name (our main contact):

Address: (where instructions/stickers can be sent

Stickers: You will receive two trash bag stickers per worker. IF that isn't enough, how many extra stickers do you need?

Municipality: City/town/villagewhereyou'llclean.Officiallocalgovernment name - no hamlets. We'll send your group instructions based on this municipality's Earth Day litter drop-off rules.

Phone:

Email Address :

Days your group will be cleaning:

Friday, April 12

Saturday, April 13.

Both

Area you are cleaning: Choose a public space in Onondaga County. Be specific (including cross streets) to avoid cleanup overlap.

Questions? Call (315) 453-2866.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: APRIL 3



315-453-2866

OCRRA COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



OCRRA Public Information Officer Tammy Palmer speaks to members of Zonta Club of Syracuse about OCRRA services in Onondaga County and recycling rules.



Arc of Onondaga employee Vinny Muro sorts batteries collected from OCRRA's kiosks. See locations for battery drop-offs on page 3.





Spring Gardening Disposal Tips

Handheld Tools: Pruning shears, trowels, weeders and other small tools that cannot be reused or donated belong in the trash where metal can be extracted for recycling. In 2022, OCRRA's Waste-to-Energy Facility recovered 25,763,840 pounds of metal, enough to build 10,000 cars.

Large Tools: Rakes, shovels and other tools unfit for donations should be put in the trash. If they are too large for trash pick-up, contact your hauler or visit the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station to dispose of the tools for a fee. Again, metal is recovered from trash for recycling.

Flowerpots: Clay and ceramic are not the same as glass used for bottled soda and other beverages. Clay, ceramic or plastic pots and planter trays that can't be reused belong in the trash. Some garden centers may reuse seedling trays. Call ahead to check.

Herbicides and Pesticides: Completely empty containers go in the trash. If you or a neighbor cannot use up any remaining product, gather other hazardous household materials and visit www.OCRRA.org/toxics to make an OCRRA HHW drop-off appointment.



Enjoy photos, videos and great tips to reduce, reuse and recycle on our **NEW** Instagram page.

Find us at: www.instagram.com/ocrra.cny

FACE Furniture that is unsuitable for donating can be delivered to the Rock Cut Road Transfer Station in Jamesville.



Where Can You Recycle Batteries in Onondaga County?

Maria Bianchetti, Recycling Operations Manager

If you bring household batteries (alkalines, rechargeables, button/coin batteries) to OCRRA drop-off locations they all get recycled. While they NEVER belong in home recycling bins, OCRRA makes it easy to recycle household batteries at thirteen convenient locations in Onondaga County.

State law prohibits rechargeable batteries in trash. They can spark fires that endanger workers who collect curbside materials and damage transport vehicles and facilities where materials are managed. They often look like typical alkaline batteries (but are labeled as "rechargeable"). You may find them in electronics and power tools as well.

All Wegmans and Green Hills locations have brand new kiosks labeled with clear instructions for depositing each type of battery. All kiosks accept only household alkaline, rechargeable and button/ coin batteries (like the ones found in hearing aids or calculators).

Sealed lead acid batteries, such as batteries found in cars and Power Wheels toys are not accepted at these kiosks; they can be returned to any location that sells them. Also, batteries found in e-bikes and e-scooters are not accepted in the kiosks. Use the searchable database on www.OCRRA.org to find a list of places that accept them for recycling.

Visit **www.OCRRA.org/batteries** for more details about the types of batteries accepted in our kiosks. Battery drop-off locations :

- Wegmans (all Onondaga County stores; foyer area)
- Green Hills Farms (5933 S. Salina St., Syracuse; foyer area)
- Civic Center (421 Montgomery St., Syracuse; basement by escalator)
- WrightwayHardware (9236OswegoRd., Baldwinsville)
- Nightingale's Tully Lakes Hardware (6 Elm St., Tully)
- Nightingale Mills Ace Hardware (4068 S. Street Road, Marcellus)

Maria Bianchetti can be reached at mbianchetti@ocrra.org.



OCRRA's battery drop-off bins have labels to help you sort common household batteries. While these batteries never belong in your home recycling bin, they can be recycled if they are dropped off at our partner locations.



Recycling Rh to da

Avoid Wishcycling

Dear Rhoda,

I've recently learned that no egg cartons belong in the recycling bin. I'll put them in the trash from now on. If I'm not sure how to manage an item in the future, what is the best way for me to find the answer?

— Farmer in Fabius

Dear Farmer,

You've already taken the first critical step by asking for help. Thank you! We all wish everything could be easily recycled, but putting an item in the recycling bin because you think it should be recycled can be detrimental. Wishcycling only leads to contamination, added expenses and delays at facilities where recyclables are sorted. Fortunately, Onondaga County residents who aren't sure how to properly dispose of an item have several options at their fingertips.

- Join OCRRA's email list to get drop-off event notifications and the digital version of this newsletter. You may get one or two each month. Go to **www.OCRRA.org** and scroll to the bottom of the page to sign up.
- Follow OCRRA on your favorite social media platform for frequent tips and reminders.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OCRRA LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/OCRRA YouTube: www.youtube.com/OCRRA

- Print OCRRA's recycling rules annually to keep near your trash and recycling bins. Find a printable version for home recycling here: www.OCRRA.org/services/recycle
- Look for the "How do I get rid of..." bar on **www.OCRRA.org** to use a searchable database. Type in Styrofoam, cardboard, food waste, clothing and other items for guidance. If you can't find an item, you'll have the option to send feedback for an answer.

- Instagram: www.instagram.com/OCRRA.cny/
- Contact the main office by emailing **info@OCRRA.org** or calling (315) 453-2866.

Onondaga County does not have an unlimited capacity to manage trash. Recycling properly helps us reduce waste and prevents contamination in your recycling bin. There are millions of products available to consumers that may or may not really be recyclable. When in doubt, check it out.

Signed,

Recycling Rhoda



Damaged, defective or recalled batteries don't belong in OCRRA collection bins. Visit OCRRA.org for guidance.



The Hidden Cost of Fast Fashion

Lisa Piering, Recycling Specialist

The fashion world is full of lightning-fast trends. Companies cash in by making cheap garments that become too damaged to wear after a few washes. Consumers replace those "disposable" outfits more often and clothing brands make more money. The strategy, known as fast fashion, seems like a harmless way to expand the economy and indulge your creativity, but there are hidden costs that we all face sooner or later.

These hidden costs are "externalities" or costs manufacturers push outside of their budgets. They won't show up on the price tag for your new clothes. Instead of paying at checkout, people pay with tax dollars used to manage landfills that are rapidly running out of room, to build filtration systems for water polluted by fabric dyes or to visit a doctor when air pollution causes health problems.

The volume of textiles in the trash in 2018 was 10 times what the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported in 1960. Recycling textiles is difficult for a few reasons, including how thread is spun and the fiber mixtures used to produce clothing (e.g., polyester and cotton blend or a rayon shirt with pleather trim).





SO, WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THIS?

Contact NY lawmakers. The Fashion Sustainability and Social Accountability Act and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles would both require producers to take more responsibility for the impact of their products. Find your representative at www.tinyurl.com/AssemblyNY and www.tinyurl.com/SenateNY.



Invest in clothes designed to last (new or thrift shop deals). Note: A Leeds University study says retail prices don't reflect durability. How clothes are made and washed have a greater impact.



Make repairs. Replace a lost button, fix a seam, embroider over holes and remove sweater pills. Plenty of YouTube videos offer tutorials and ideas for restyling.



When repairs won't work, upcycle. Jeans can become aprons and sweaters can become mittens. Check craft sites for ideas or let your imagination run!



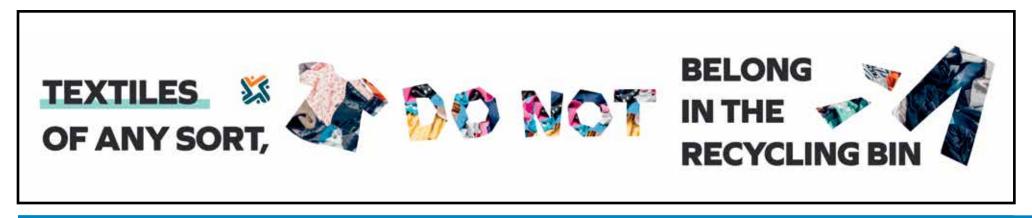
Spritz vodka (clear, bottom-shelf, unflavored) on clothes to kill odor-causing bacteria. Test fabric for discoloration first. Undershirts also protect outerwear from skin oils.

A slight odor couldn't be removed from this sweater that was picked up at a clothing swap. Instead of throwing it away, OCRRA Recycling Specialist Lisa Piering transformed it into a cozy sweater for her stylish pup, Sirius.



Line drying clothes saves energy and prevents wear-and-tear. Plus, the sun has a sanitizing effect! Use indoor racks in the winter.

Lisa Piering can be reached at Ipiering@OCRRA.org.



FACE NYSDEC: Every year, NYS residents and businesses throw away almost 1.4 billion pounds of textiles.



Could Your Unwanted Clothing Be Reused?

Donations Support Local Community Services and Reduce Waste

Tammy Palmer, Public Information Officer

Over the past year, more than one million pounds of clothing was sold at Onondaga County thrift stores run by the Salvation Army or Rescue Mission. While donors may have simply wanted to clear a closet, the act of gathering and dropping off unwanted clothing creates a powerful ripple effect in our community that saves money and changes lives.

Through these two organizations alone, over 600 tons of wearable clothing that could have ended up with curbside trash were reused instead. This sort of waste reduction is extremely important, as trash in Onondaga County is managed at OCRRA's Waste-to-Energy Facility (WTE), where it is converted to electricity. The plant does not have an unlimited capacity for garbage and the local population is expected to grow significantly in the next few decades.

If there is not enough room at the WTE, the alternative is paying to ship excess waste to a landfill in another county, where space is also limited. Donations that are in good enough condition for reuse help alleviate trash capacity challenges and reduce expenses.

In addition to reducing local disposal burdens, clothing and other sellable donations produce revenue to support important social services. The Salvation Army funds their Adult Rehabilitation Center program through the sale of donated goods. The Rescue Mission uses store revenues to fund an emergency shelter, meals, supportive permanent housing and employment resources for those in need. Thrift stores offer reduced prices to families with limited incomes.

At these locations, daily truckloads of clothing donations are inspected to determine what can be resold each season for men, women and children of all sizes. More donations of men's clothing are always needed. "70% of our sheltered clients in Syracuse are men," explains Luana Lovenguth, with the Rescue Mission Alliance. Winter coats are usually on donation wish lists. "We really need jeans," adds Bryan Jarvi, with the Salvation Army. "They are so popular in the store."





During the winter, loads of summer clothing donations are stored at the Salvation Army in Syracuse until it is time to sell them in the retail store.

Clothes should never be mixed with items in your curbside recycling bin, where they get dirty. Instead, visit www.OCRRA.org/textiles to find a list of locations where clean and dry wearable donations can be dropped off. Wet and moldy clothing is not salvageable and should be thrown away. Organizations lose time and money disposing of items they cannot resell or recycle. Visit www.tinyurl.com/RMDonations to review the Rescue Mission's list of acceptable and unacceptable items. Call the Salvation Army at (518) 933-5872 to inquire about donations before a drop-off.

Beyond clothing, there are many other textiles accepted as donations and they don't always have to be in perfect condition. Check with nearby animal rescue groups to find out if they need blankets and towels. The Rescue Mission gives some mismatched items to shelter clients. Lovenguth says her organization even accepts single socks along with ripped, torn and stained clothing that vendors commonly buy to repurpose as insulation or industrial rags. Be sure to put those items in a separate bag labeled RAGS. Do not include fabric that was soaked in anything hazardous.

Spring is the perfect time to reexamine what we need in our closets as the weather warms up. There are several tips in the article on page 4 to make clothing last a little longer. If you don't have sewing and restyling skills, donations (not just clothing) are a great way to reduce waste, reuse tons of clothing and support vital services in our community.

Clothing donations are sorted by season, men's, women's and children's selections at the Rescue Mission Warehouse in Liverpool.

Tammy Palmer can be reached at tpalmer@ocrra.org.

GO BEHIND THE SCENES!

Watch the journey of your clothing donations on our YouTube page. See how the Rescue Mission and Salvation Army manage drop-offs, from warehouse deliveries to thrift store sales. Plus, find out what's on the Salvation Army's wish list for spring cleaning donations. Visit www.YouTube/OCRRA to browse our videos section.



YouTube

FACE The main source of textiles in Municipal Solid Waste in the U.S. is discarded clothing, according to the EPA.



Household Hazardous Waste Drop-offs

Monday, Thursday & Friday: 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

First Saturday of the month: 8 a.m. - noon

Appointment required at www.OCRRA.org/hhw



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This quarterly publication is brought to you by



100 Elwood Davis Road | North Syracuse, NY 13212-4312

TAMMY PALMER Editor and Public Information Officer (315) 453 - 2866 info@OCRRA.org OCRRA's waste reduction, reuse and recycling program efforts (including this newsletter) are partially financed by a grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

Printed on Recycled Paper





Follow OCRRA on Facebook and ask us all your recycling and disposal questions!

Q: I know it's a bad idea to put meat in a home compost pile. So, why does OCRRA list meat under acceptable food waste items to drop off at your compost facilities?

A: There's a big difference between the little compost pile in your backyard and the large mounds you see being carefully monitored and processed at OCRRA's compost sites. Microorganisms, insects and bacteria break down the organic material that is mixed together for composting, including food scraps and yard waste. That microbial breakdown produces a lot of heat, which is fueled by the size of the pile, moisture content, amount of aeration, etc. That's why you might notice steam rolling off some compost piles at OCRRA's sites.

Compost piles must reach a certain temperature for an extended period of time to efficiently kill the kind of parasites and pathogens that hang around decaying meat. Then, the pile needs time to "cure", so organisms that can't tolerate the hot phase (e.g. worms) can move back in and get to work.

The facilities at OCRRA are designed to carefully monitor temperatures, moisture and aeration in very larges piles of compost. That process ensures the organic materials will safely break down over several months. The little pile in your backyard has far fewer controls and is likely to create a foul odor and attract rodents and pets from all over the neighborhood if meat is thrown into the mix.

Home composting is still a great way to reduce waste and return nutrients to your soil. You just need to stick to recommended ingredients, including fruit, vegetables, coffee grounds, indoor plant trimmings, yard trimmings and leaves. Visit **www.OCRRA.org** for more resources.

Our Facebook page shares weekly tips and information. Visit **www.Facebook.com/OCRRA** to keep up with our posts, ask questions and send messages.

TAGE The NYSDEC offers detailed guidance for home composting online. Visit www.tinyurl.com/CompostDEC for help.





From the Executive Director's Desk...

Recycling vs. the Circular Economy

"Yes Shawn, Your Future Is In Our Trash Can"

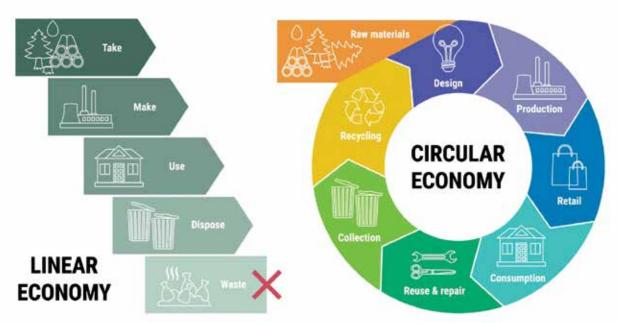
Kevin Spillane, Executive Director, OCRRA

I was having dinner with my son, Shawn, and he wanted me to explain something he had read online about a circular economy, the waste industry's buzz words these days. I told him the idea is that his future is in our trash can. He didn't think that was funny either.

Under the current linear economic model, raw materials are constantly extracted from the earth to make new products that are eventually thrown away. This system provides no long-term sustainability and fails to acknowledge the lack of space we have to handle all the garbage generated each day.

Of course we recycle some products (mostly paper and some plastics) at the end of their lifecycle. The quality of the material often declines each time it is transformed into a new product, until it is no longer usable. Because of this, recycling alone cannot overcome our waste capacity dilemma.

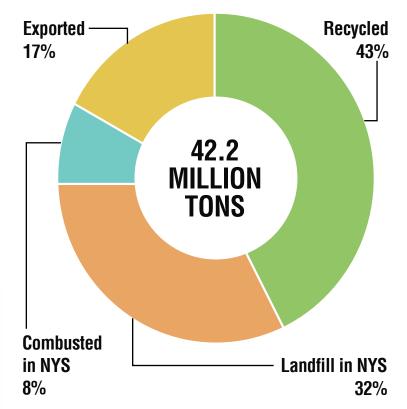
In a circular economy, the goal is to prevent waste and pollution from the start, with a system fueled by reuse and regeneration. Products would be designed to last longer. Consumers would have better access to parts for repairs. More products would be made that can be refilled or reused. Companies would find ways to reuse waste generated during manufacturing.



The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has released its new 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), aiming to increase recycling of the State's total waste stream to 85% by 2050, from the current rate of 43%. The plan outlines a series of measures, including an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework, expansion of organics (food waste) recycling and the creation of a circular economy to reduce the need to dispose of so much waste.

C The State's new Solid Waste Management Plan is a roadmap for advancing more sustainable solid waste management to reduce landfilled waste and address

2018 NYS WASTE MANAGEMENT



Per the DEC's report, the amount of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW or trash) generated, per capita, remained stable from 2008 to 2018. This is seen as a positive sign since waste generation generally grows with an area's gross domestic product and New York State's grew by 35% over that period. Still, the State is pushing to further reduce waste generation.

Several action items to achieve these aspirational reductions would need support from the state legislature, including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging and paper products. Currently, many manufacturers have no responsibility to dispose of the waste generated by items they produce. That burden falls on municipalities and their residents to pay for the management of these items through recycling or disposal. EPR would transfer more responsibility to producers, creating an incentive to design products that last longer and are easier to reuse or recycle. Another action item would give the NYSDEC a framework, by 2027, to implement EPR for items regulated by New York State in the future. Per the SWMP, the framework would "establish a comprehensive process for recommending, developing, proposing, and passing new EPR laws that follow best practices." Onondaga County certainly supports the plan. We are making strides every day to increase the recycling rate by encouraging the reduction and elimination of food waste that can be diverted to compost programs. OCRRA is also planning future development at our sites to make it more convenient for residents to recycle and reuse items. We all need to do our part to save the world a little each day for the next generation. That begins in your garbage can (and recycle bin).

one of New York's largest contributors to climate-altering greenhouse gases, "DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. "Working closely with DEC's State, local, and community partners, New York State is bolstering existing efforts to divert waste from landfills, return materials back to productive use, and reduce climate emissions.

A Waste Dive report determined construction and demolition debris (C&D) helped push up New York's recycling rate since the last SWMP was released in 2010, but the rate for curbside recycling has essentially stayed the same. The article also points out that the State's latest plan relies heavily on data collected before the Covid-19 pandemic and China's National Sword policy, which significantly curtailed shipments of our recycling material to China.

In 2018, the State's total waste stream generation was 42.2 million tons. 43% was recycled, 32% was landfilled in New York State, 8% was combusted (at Waste-to-Energy Facilities like we have in Onondaga County), and 17% was exported for disposal out of the state.

Kevin Spillane can be reached at kspillane@ocrra.org

FACE Onondaga County does not operate a landfill. Trash is turned into electricity at the Waste-to-Energy Facility.

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OCRRA Compost

Look for a new design on OCRRA Premium Compost bags, with the same great product inside. **OCRRA** processes local food and yard waste to create an allnatural soil amendment for your garden, made in Central New York. Each bag is made with 25% recycled material and contains 1 cubic foot (about 40 lbs.) of 1/4" screened premium



compost. Supplies are available at OCRRA's Compost Sites or visit www.tinyurl.com/BuyCompostBags for a list of retailers.

Need more than a bag? Visit OCRRA's compost sites to fill your trunk (car, van or SUV) or we'll load your truck bed. Amboy Compost Site offers bulk 1/4" screened compost, while Jamesville Compost Site sells bulk 1/2" screened compost. Both locations also sell bulk loads of mulch to help suppress weeds and beautify your landscape.

1) Compost

- **Trunk Load:** \$10
- Bulk ¹/₂" (Jamesville only): \$16/cu. yd.
- Bulk ¼" (Amboy only): \$20/cu. yd.
- **Bagged ¼" (1 cu. ft.):** \$5 or 5 bags for \$20

2) Mulch:

- Trunk Load: \$5
- Bulk Double Ground (Jamesville only): \$14/cu.yd.
- Bulk Premium Triple Ground: \$16/cu.yd.

New Bag, Same Great Get OCRRA's 2024 Compost Pass

Onondaga County residents who buy a \$25 Compost Site Pass can drop off unlimited yard waste and food scraps at OCRRA's Amboy or Jamesville Compost Sites. Food scraps can also be dropped off at Rock Cut Road Transfer Station during residential hours.

Compost Site Passes are for residential users only. Commercial customers dropping off material pay per load or ton. A pass is valid for this calendar year and comes with two free bags of premium compost. However, no pass is needed to buy OCRRA's compost or mulch.

Visit www.OCRRA.org/shop to order the 2024 Compost Site Pass online. Passes are also available to purchase at both of OCRRA's compost sites.



ACCEPTED ITEMS:

Fruit, beans, bones, bread, brush, coffee grounds, coffee filters, eggs, dairy, fish, garden waste, grains, grass, hay, hedge trimmings, leaves, meat, paper cups, paper napkins, paper towels, pine cones, pine needles, plants, sticks, straw, tea bags, tree limbs, vegetables and vines.

PROHIBITED ITEMS:

Blacktop, concrete, diapers, dirt, garbage, glass, landscape fabric, lumber, metal, paper, pet waste, plastic items (including bags), rocks, rubber, soil, and Styrofoam. Items longer than 12 feet in length are not accepted at OCRRA's Compost Sites.

SITE HOURS

Amboy Compost Site

6296 Airport Road Camillus, NY 13209

Hours: April 1 - November 23 MON. - SAT. 7:30 am - 3:30 pm

*No weekend hours after 11/23.

Jamesville Compost Site

4370 Route 91 Jamesville, NY 13078

Hours: April 4 - November 23 THURS. - SAT. 7:30 am – 3:30 pm

*Closes for season after 11/23



OCRRA'S EARTH DAY LITTER CLEANUP

APRIL 12-13 Choose one day or both

Register by Apr. 3 at www.OCRRA.org/earthday

COMMUNITY **DROP-OFF EVENTS**

Options beyond OCRRA for electronics, shredding, etc.

www.OCRRA.org/events

CLOSED FOR THE HOLIDAY MONDAY, MAY 27

OCRRA sites closed for Memorial Day

JAMESVILLE COMPOST SITE OPEN APRIL 4 - NOV. 23. Thurs. - Sat. 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **Residential Service**



In 2019, the U.S. had 66.2 million tons of food waste from retail, service & residential sectors - 5% was composted.