

TRASH TALK

May 2019



Message from Composters serving Oregon



Why they don't want Compostable Packaging and Serviceware

Every year, the Pacific Northwest's compost industry turns hundreds of tons of yard and food wastes into nutrient-rich compost for agriculture, nurseries, landscaping businesses and home gardens. The quality compost products they create develop healthier and more resilient soil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, recycle nutrients, conserve water, and may reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Thompson's Sanitary Service hauls Newport's curbside Mixed Compostables to one of these service providers, Pacific Region Compost in Corvallis.

"Compostable" packaging and serviceware items have been on the rise for the past decade and are increasingly ending up in commercial compost facilities across Oregon. These materials compromise composting programs and limit many of the environmental benefits of successful composting.

Nine reasons provided by compostable processing facilities as to why they don't want "compostable" packaging and service ware:

- 1) *They don't always compost* - not all 'certified' compostable items will actually compost (break down) as fully or quickly as they need them to.
- 2) *Contamination happens* - As a consumer, you may sort properly - but your neighbor might not. When collection programs accept
- 3) *They hurt resale quality* - Facilities don't want a finished compost contaminated with fragments of packaging and serviceware, and their consumers won't purchase the material.
- 4) *We can't sell to organic farmers* - Farmers often use compost in the production of organic foods. National standards prohibit the use of many of the compostable packaging materials when making compost.
- 5) *They may threaten human and environmental health* - Packaging designed for water and grease resistance as well as consumer packaging may contain chemicals that can transfer into the finished compost.
- 6) *It increases our costs and makes our job harder* - It takes more water, more energy, and additional resources
- 7) *Just because something is compostable doesn't mean it's better for the environment* - Oregon DEQ has found that compostable serviceware often has a larger (life time) environmental footprint than non-compostable items.
- 8) *In some cases, the benefits of recycling surpass those of composting* - Some items, like paper bags, can be either composted or recycled.
- 9) *Good intentions aren't being realized* - compostable items often cost more (sometimes 5x as much).

compostable products, non-compostable look-alike items inevitably end up in the mix.

In the Know

Household Hazardous Waste Event July 20

July 20th @ Dahl Transfer Station in Waldport



Bring your Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) to the free annual HHW disposal event (each year it rotates to a different location in the County) put on by the Lincoln County Solid Waste District and Lincoln County Haulers Association.

When: July 20th, 9am-2pm

Where: Waldport, Dahl Transfer Station

List of items accepted include:

- **Poisons** - pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and other poisons.
- **Heavy Metals** - mercury and products containing elemental mercury
- **Corrosives** - acids, bases, and reactives

Composter Message

For more detailed information about compostable packaging and serviceware, go to our website.

Under our 'Printables' drop down menu on thompsonsanitary.com, you can read the full message from Oregon Composters about why they don't want compostable packaging and service ware in Mixed Compostables.

40 YEARS

ANNIVERSARY

Scott Hecht was born and raised in Newport where he graduated from Newport High School in 1979 and has been working for Thompson's Sanitary Service since.

This column is dedicated to Scott, who is an exemplary employee and valuable member of our TSS family. When he came to work for Thompson's, Ken Thompson was the owner, then Bob Thompson, and now third-generation owners Rob Thompson and Ken Riley. Scott has seen major changes in the industry during his forty years. He started as a shagger on the back of a truck; fetching metal cans, carrying them on his back, and then dumping them in the truck. Due to automation, Scott can now dump the carts from his truck with an automated arm and onboard computer. But Scott is frequently going above and beyond to make sure his customers get the very best service because he has a huge amount of pride in his job and a heart for people. He knows his route well and if a regular forgets to put their cart out, he'll usually go and fetch it so they don't get missed. Beyond that, Scott has been spending his free time for the last 30+ years as the NHS track team long jump coach and belongs to Knights of Columbus. Next time you see Scott, give him a wave and thank him for being so awesome!

Working for Thompson's since 1979



SCOTT HECHT



MAXIMIZE

your Mixed Compostables Cart

100% of Mixed Compostables are recycled into compost. Are you putting all these in?



ALL FOOD - fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood, bones, grains, beans, pasta, bread, cheese, and eggshells.



PLANTS - floral trimmings, tree trimmings, leaves, grass, brush, weeds.



FOOD-SOILED PAPER - napkins, paper towels, paper plates, tea bags, coffee grounds/filters, wooden crates, sawdust.

