

Important Compost Advisory from Rapid City's Solid Waste Division

Update 3/2/26

The Rapid City Solid Waste Division is committed to providing compost as a valuable resource for our community. Compost testing conducted in 2024 detected the presence of multiple herbicides in our yard waste compost, including **Aminocyclopyrachlor, Aminopyralid, Clopyralid, and Picloram**. While routine testing is not conducted annually, the Solid Waste Division is continuing this advisory out of an abundance of caution.

The U.S. Composting Council identifies four herbicides as persistent, meaning they can take longer to break down. Compounds in this category have been detected in our compost. These herbicides may remain present in compost or soil for months to years, depending on concentration levels. This is a well-documented challenge affecting composting programs nationwide, particularly when yard waste contains grass clippings or plant material treated with certain lawn care products.

Source of Herbicides

The herbicides detected in the compost most likely entered the compost stream through yard waste materials such as grass clippings, leaves, and branches delivered to the Solid Waste Facility for processing. Some materials may also originate from agricultural sources, such as hay or animal bedding, which can contain residual herbicides.

Recommended Uses

Rapid City compost remains a beneficial soil amendment and can be used effectively in many applications, including:

- Lawn establishment and turf improvement
- Landscaping and soil conditioning
- Erosion control and soil building

Some plants—particularly sensitive broadleaf plants such as vegetables, flowers, and certain ornamentals—can be more susceptible to trace levels of persistent herbicides.

For gardeners who plan to use compost in vegetable gardens or flower beds, we recommend testing the compost in a small area before widespread use. In some cases, higher concentrations of compost may impact plant health, including reduced growth, poor yields, or plant damage in sensitive species.

Additional Resources

For additional information about compost safety, herbicides, and best practices, visit the U.S. Composting Council website at:

www.compostingcouncil.org/page/persistent-herbicides-faq



You can also search “persistent herbicides compost USCC” for helpful guidance and resources.