

THREE-IN-ONE SOLUTION

THE BOY SCOUTS in the Peel Region of Canada needed a way to earn some money. Companies in the area needed a way to get rid of plastic drums instead of paying to landfill them. And homeowners needed a convenient way to compost organic wastes.

"I don't really know who first thought of the idea of making home composters out of the drums," says Glenn Milbury, coordinator for industrial waste reduction in Peel Region's waste management division. "But it didn't take the First Erindale Boy Scouts long to see an opportunity knocking for them." Before long, the scouts were busy cutting both ends off the barrels and drilling 16 two-inch holes in each one, turning them into home composters. In return, Peel pays them \$10 per unit. The composers are then distributed free to interested homeowners. "We've given out over 3,000 so far and will do more this fall," says Milbury. "We've even had to go elsewhere, down in the States, for more drums!"

Along with the scout-made composters, goes an instructional brochure on making compost. "We get a few calls for more advice," says Milbury. "Occasionally, people get their compost too wet or too dry, or don't stir it enough and there's a bit of an odor problem. But it's working out very well." Homeowners are notified about the availability of the composters by way of their water bills.

TIRES AND LEAVES

Another bright idea Peel Region is testing could keep a sizable portion of old tires out of the waste stream. In a one year trial operation, tires that are retreadable will be sorted out and sent to the Technitread Ltd. plant at Brantford for retreading. The rest will be shredded and hauled away for recycling. Formerly, some 35 to 50 tons of waste tires went to landfills in the area. "Tires don't compact

Canada's Peel Region aids plastic drum reuse, backyard composting and Boy Scout fund-raising venture.

at all in a landfill and take years to break down," points out Milbury.

Peel is also moving ahead with a big leaf composting project. Last year 7,000 tons were collected, which when composted at the landfill site, will be used as cover for site closure. "We're not presently composting all our leaves because of vacuum truck collection limitations," says Milbury. "We are going forward this year with a distribution of recyclable paper bags for leaf pickup in areas not serviced by the vacuum truck." The paper bags can be composted right along with the leaves. "We looked at biodegradable plastic bags but like the paper ones because they seem to hold up better. We're going to be using paper bags from three different companies this fall. If this works out, we will expand the bag collection to all areas in the Region not serviced by the vacuum truck."

—G.L. ■

