

# Salt Lake County Sanitation Division

[www.sanitation.slco.org](http://www.sanitation.slco.org) • 801-562-6435

## Green Waste in Salt Lake County

With warmer weather comes gardening, yard care, and garbage cans full of green stuff. In the Sanitation Division of Salt Lake County, we hear from residents who want ways to dispose of their green waste other than putting it in the regular garbage can. To respond to customer requests and meet Mayor Corroon's vision for a more environmentally sustainable county, the Sanitation Division is looking for good green waste solutions.

One option we are looking at is curb-side green-waste collection that would put the green into the landfill's composting program. Reports from independent researchers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and local landfill operators, indicate that the majority of green waste collected curb-side is grass clippings.

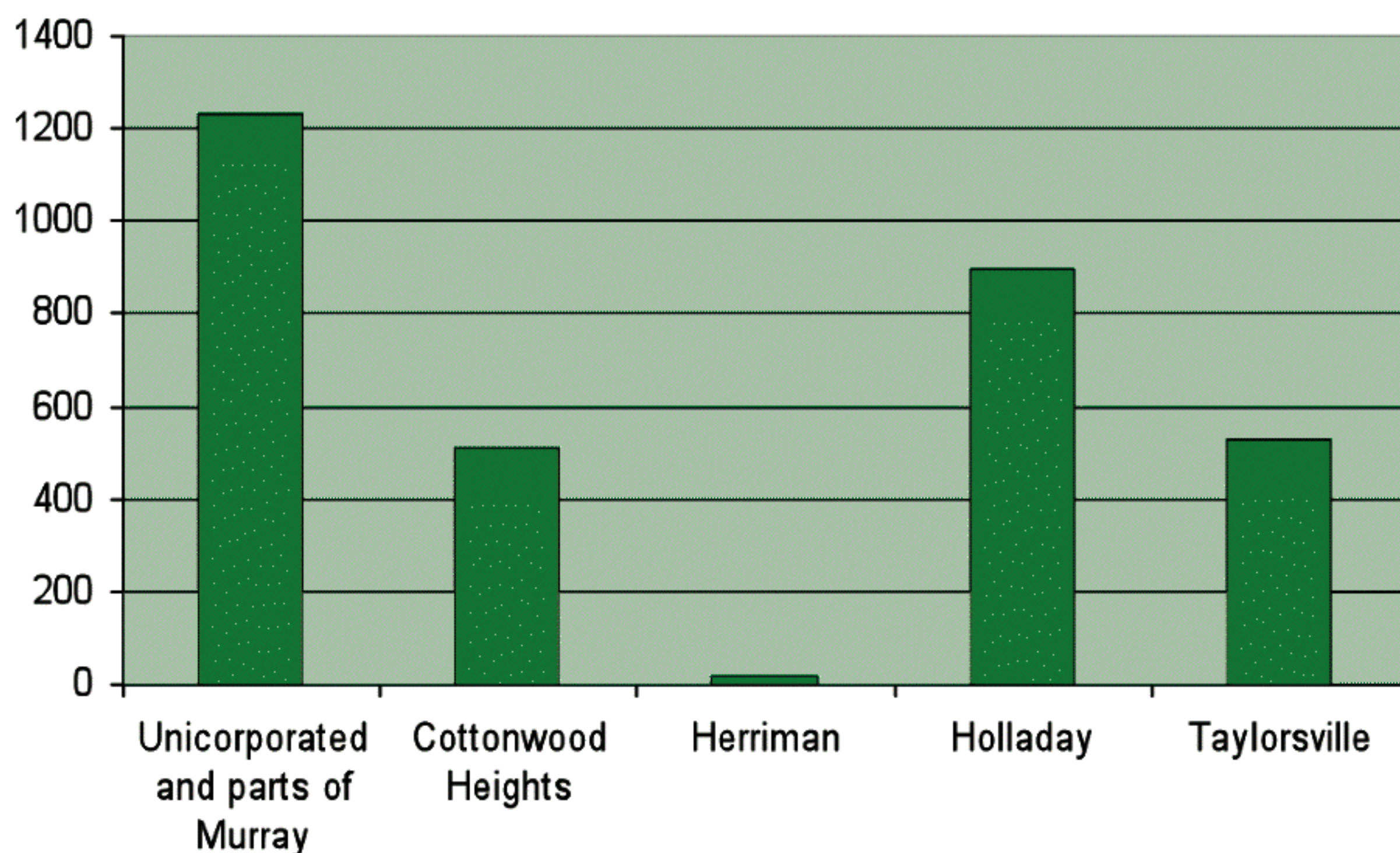
It turns out that grass clippings are not very useful in large-scale composting operations like the ones we have at both municipal landfills. But grass is very useful in the landfill itself because it helps break down waste and increase methane, which is captured and turned into energy that powers homes. Large branches and other woody materials that do not easily fit in curb-side cans are not as useful in the landfill but are ideal for mulching and composting.

We need to find the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly ways to collect green waste and get it to where it will do the most good. It is expensive to purchase and operate trucks that pick up curb-side cans. Plus there is an environmental cost of putting more diesel-fueled heavy equipment on the road. So curb-side collection may or may not be our best option.

Residents in the Salt Lake County Sanitation District get complete waste removal services that include a great option for green waste: our residential trailer rental program, which collects about 1,300 tons of clean green waste each year. This equates to an average of 32.5 pounds per home within our service district. The trailer program is a very efficient and "green" way to dispose of yard waste. We also collect green waste during the annual area cleanup program and when we collect Christmas trees and leaves. All of this green waste goes to the landfill's composting program.

We have more research to do to find the best way to manage green waste and reduce the overall waste stream.

Tons of Green Waste Collected in 2008



On our website you will find helpful suggestions for reducing green waste at home, such as composting and grass and leaf-cycling: [www.sanitation.slco.org](http://www.sanitation.slco.org). And we will continue to find other ways to reduce our impact on the environment including purchasing hybrid trucks within the next two years.

We thank you for your suggestions, comments, and concerns about keeping Salt Lake County clean and healthy.

EPA report on green waste in landfills: <http://epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/>

