

City raises stink over compost smell

By Sue Buck
Staff Writer

Stop stinking, says the Farmington Hills City Council to those who compost organic materials in the city.

The council passed an ordinance Monday it hopes will help control composting. The ordinance takes effect in three weeks and a violation carries up to a \$100 fine.

"The first attempt by the zoning department is always to educate," said Lee Blizman, supervisor of the zoning division, in a separate interview.

The Hills ordinance establishes a requirement for a 10-foot setback from the property line, which allows those with smaller lots to compost.

Compost piles may include a combination of organic yard and garden waste, such as weeds, branches, bark, grass clippings, stalks and stems, brush or vines. They cannot be within any drainage easement or in any front or side yard.

COUNCIL

Compost piles must not exceed four feet by eight feet or six feet in diameter and cannot exceed four feet in height.

Double compost piles are allowed, providing the total size does not exceed the previously mentioned requirement.

Compost piles must be maintained so that odors do not emanate.

The city will explain the ordinance in its newsletter, which will educate the public on proper maintenance of compost piles.

Zoning inspectors involved in enforcing the ordinance have already distributed bulletins published by Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Service to residents who are the subject of complaints.

Technically, compost piles are

described as "finished" or "unfinished."

Unfinished compost is still decomposing. Finished compost is totally decomposed with no big pieces left and is pliable like peat moss.

When starting a compost pile, the extension service suggests:

- Don't use unfinished compost on plants. It will rob your plant's nitrogen instead of acting as a fertilizer. You can also spread garden diseases with unfinished compost.

- Mix finished compost with topsoil to prepare garden or flower beds or for putting mixtures.

- Mix manure (if available) or high nitrogen fertilizer with yard wastes. Sprinklings of fish fertilizer, ammonium sulfate (20 percent nitrogen) or urea (45 percent nitrogen) also work well. Don't use more than one-fourth pound of fertilizer per square foot of compost. When composting low-nitrogen materials such as sawdust, paper and woody plants, increase fertilizer rates.

- Add lime, small amounts of wood ash or crushed eggshells to neutralize acids which may form and cause an odor problem.

- Layer materials two to six inches thick, taking care to mix up grass clippings because they tend to compact.

- Add topsoil to layers to provide a good source of microorganisms.

- Don't compost weeds that are heavily laden with seeds because some will not be killed during the heating process.

- Don't ignore strong odors. Just turn the pile when odors are detected.

- Don't add meat or fish scraps to the compost mixture. They may attract animals (dogs, cats, rats, etc.) and they do not decompose easily.

- Don't add diseased vegetable plants to the pile if compost will be used on a vegetable garden. The disease organism may reappear the next year.

OBITUARIES

MORTON STEIN

Mr. Stein, 72, of Farmington died June 20 in University Hospital, Ann Arbor.

Born in Baltimore, Md., Mr. Stein was an engineer.

Survivors include his wife, Eleanor; son, Dennis; daughter, Janice Kingrey; three brothers and one sister; eight grandchildren.

Services were at the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Dr. Douglas Vernon of St. Timothy United Methodist

Church officiating. Burial was in Oakland Hills Cemetery, Novi.

HELEN CALLAHAN

Mrs. Callahan, 81, of Farmington died June 22 in Hutsford Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Born in Breathitt County, Ky., Mrs. Callahan was a retired custodian for the Farmington Public School system.

Survivors include her sons, Wil-

liam, Jack and Bernice; daughters, Jane Sublett and Janet Hamilton; one brother and two sisters; 14 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Services were June 24 at the Heenev-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with her son, the Rev. Bernice Callahan of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Citrus Springs, Fla., officiating. Burial was in Oakland Hills Gardens Mausoleum, Novi.

BEATRICE C. ABRAM

Mrs. Abram, 83, of Farmington Hills died June 21 in St. Mary Hospital, Livonia.

Born in Toledo, Ohio, Mrs. Abram was a homemaker.

Survivors include her husband, Floyd; three nephews and one niece.

Mass was celebrated June 25 in St. Gerald Catholic Church, Farmington, with the Rev. John Menner officiating. Burial was in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Southfield.

Monthly Allergy Tip



Enjoy the beautiful summer weather, whether you have allergies or not!

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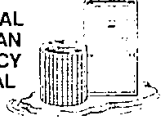
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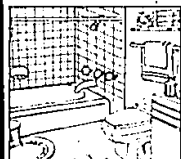
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