

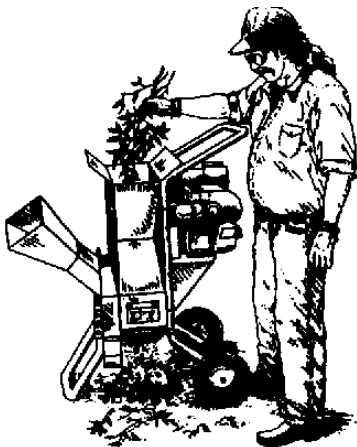
Composting 101

Chipper/Shredders

Equipment options for home use includes small electric units designed to shred leaves, units combining a chipper/shredder with a leaf vacuum/blower, and heavy-duty gas and electric powered chipper/shredders capable of reducing three-inch thick limbs to a fine mulch. Prices are equally variable; chipper/shredders range in cost from about \$100 for an electric leaf shredder to more than \$1,500 for heavy duty chippers.

Gasoline-powered models tend to be faster than electric models, but they emit smoke and also make more noise. They are usually quicker at shredding twigs than leaves.

There are many factors to consider in the purchase of a shredder/chipper, such as: what types of materials need to be shredded (*large or small, hardwood or softwood, etc.*), the type of cutting/shredding mechanism used, price, electric vs. gas, horsepower, safety features, diameter of branches the machine can handle, hopper size, speed, reduction ratio, (*the greater the ratio, the smaller the wood chip*), how the machine discharges, and warranty. Chippers and shredders are not only good for making mulch, but also speed up the composting process by making the job of the decomposers much easier. They can also be used to pulverize finished compost into a finer material for use on lawns or as a potting mix.



Since the cost of this equipment can be prohibitive, collective purchases can be made by residents who have the need for a chipper or shredder, but cannot justify the cost individually.

Homeowners associations, especially, can benefit from the purchase of a collective chipper/shredder: the cost to each household would be minimal, and any extra material generated could be used on common areas, trails, etc.

Grinding equipment can also be rented, by the day or the hour. Again, by going in on a rental with neighbors or friends, the

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costs can be reduced significantly.

Always wear safety glasses, gloves and shoes when operating shredding equipment, and always follow the safety guidelines provided by the manufacturer.

**Chipper/
Shredder
Safety**



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gloves and shoes when
operating chipping or shredding*