The Formentera Council's environment department will start hauling away one thousand cubic metres of garden clippings from a staging area located beside Es Cap de Barbaria's waste treatment plant. The repurposed waste will not only filter organic nutrients into Formentera fields; it will also bolster the capacity of the land to hold water, noted environment secretary Daisee Aguilera.

The clippings will be dispatched across the island between 8.00am and 1.00pm and again from 3.00pm to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. The three firms assisting in transport—Foreva, Formentera Trucks and Transports Formentera— will take advantage of return journeys on trips to the treatment plant to haul away loads and deliver them to interested parties across the island. Beneficiaries of the service will pay based on the amount of clippings they wish to receive—€15 for 5m^3, €20 for 8m^3, €25 for 14m^3 and €35 for 20m^3. Islanders should contact the environment office (àrea de Medi Ambient, 971 32 12 10) or one of the freight companies directly.

Recycling organic waste

The purpose of the initiative is to give islanders who work the land a way to enrich soil and boost its capacity for water retention. Singling out farmers as the group potentially most interested in the initiative, Aguilera said reusing biowaste could increase crop yield, save water for irrigation and help complete the cycle of waste production and management. According to the secretary, the material is also effective for mulching, a technique consisting in covering the base of plants in order, among other benefits, to trap in moisture and prevent weeds.

The effort will help free up the Es Cap de Barbaria staging area for other uses, such as a compost pile. Started with material extracted from the sewage treatment plant, compost would be one way to generate nutrient-rich earth that could be cycled back into the local eco-system. Gardening scraps were chipped with a “biochipper” purchased by the Formentera Council with help from the EU's Leader fund. The administration owns two smaller chippers which it loans to islanders free of charge so they can shred green trimmings generated at home. The service can be requested at the Citizen's Information Office (OAC) or by contacting the environment office.