



The Formentera Island Council office of the environment has begun shredding plant clippings from municipal pruning efforts and private citizens' green garden waste. Calculated at roughly 3,500 metric tonnes, or enough to cover an entire football field with a layer three metres thick, the organic material has been gathered at the Es Cap de Barbaria transfer station since January.

The goal of the operation is to favour the generation of shredded organic matter – 'biomass' – and avoid the use of controlled burns whenever possible. The shredded biomass, which has a number of different productive applications, is turn made available to the public.

Biomass can be used in composting or in the production of biofuel for hot water heaters, as well as acting as a protective layer to retain soil moisture and – particularly with the variety obtained from palm tree scraps – as stable lining for livestock.

Silvia Tur, councillor of the environment, recognised that “transport to Formentera of the biomass chipper – the only one of its kind in Eivissa – was a complex operation. We are hoping that in the space of a week, by operating mornings and afternoons, the machine is able to manage the garden waste generated and collected since January.”

In addition to the machine itself – a Willibald MZA 2800/35 (280 CV) industrial chipper – an array of other components are required for the process: a pole; a vehicle known as an 'octopus lorry'; a water lorry to maintain proper moisture levels in the organic matter and a field-operator to remove foreign objects that could possibly obstruct the chipper. The service costs 300 euros per hour.

Throughout the next year, the Formentera Council will have two other lower-strength plant-waste chippers on temporary loan and available to Formentera residents for home use. The only associated costs are for petrol although applicants are also required to sign a declaration promising repayment in the event that a machine is returned with damages caused by improper use. The Council's lending service is intended to reduce the volume of

domestically-produced yard waste sent to the Es Cap transfer plant and as an active source of shredded biomass for compost and other applications.