

# Composting Organics Introduction

## Did you know?

- 40% of landfilled material is organics and 30% of that is food.
- When food sits in the landfill, it produces Methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

The goal of this program is to create a convenient and effective method for residents to collect food scraps, food soiled paper and yardwaste that will be composted, producing a high-quality soil amendment.

**And best of all, the program is provided at no additional cost!**



## How does Food Scraps Collection work?

A two-gallon kitchen collection pail will be provided to all interested residents. This pail has a tight-sealing lid and carry handle and can be stored underneath the kitchen sink. Your food scraps should be emptied into the green Organics cart. You can line your pail with newspaper, paper towels, etc. Visit [recyclesmart.org](http://recyclesmart.org) for liner information.



## What is **acceptable** in the green Organics cart?

- **Food Scraps:** raw or cooked food scraps, vegetables, meats, seafood, dairy products, breads, grains, pastas, fruit, bones, shells.
- **Food-Soiled Paper:** pizza boxes, paper plates, napkins, paper towels.
- **Yard Trimmings:** brush, flower cuttings, flowers, garden trimmings, hay, house plants, lawn clippings, leaves, prunings, shrubbery, straw, tree twigs, weeds, wood chips.

## What is **not acceptable** in the green Organics cart?

- Plastic (***including plastic bags*** – *these may now be bagged and placed in the blue Recycling bin*)
- “Compostable” or “Biodegradable” plastic cups, plates, utensils. The *only* compostable plastic that is acceptable are BPI-Certified Compostable *Bags*
- Styrofoam, glass, metal, rocks, concrete, cactus, large tree trunks and stumps, poison oak, poison ivy.
- No pet waste, diapers or used bathroom tissue



# Frequently Asked Questions

**1. *I use the Garbage Disposal in my kitchen sink for food scraps disposal? Why should I use this program?***

Placing food and grease in your sink's garbage disposal can cause sewer line blockages. The Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San) actively discourages placing food and grease (or other fatty materials) in the sewage system. By placing leftover food scraps in the green organics cart, you'll help to prevent sewage blockages, and the food will be reused and turned into compost - a rich soil amendment.

**2. *Why can't I dispose of food scraps in regular plastic bags?***

Plastic bags and other plastic products are not compostable, and therefore cannot be placed in the organics cart. The materials in the green cart will be turned into a soil-amendment, and plastics must be kept out to prevent contamination. If a bag must be used, look for the certified compostable label on the packaging: "Compostable BPI - Meets ASTM 6400 Standard." You may also use paper bags, newspaper, or paper towels.

**3. *Why can't I place compostable plastic utensils with my food scraps?***

Compostable **plastic** cups, utensils, and to-go containers are designed to break down over time, but their decomposition takes much longer than a normal composting cycle at the compost facility. Therefore, they are NOT accepted in the program. Certified compostable bags are acceptable because they break down more quickly.

**4. *Can I use plastic bags labeled as "biodegradable?"***

No. The term "biodegradable" is not regulated whereas "compostable" is. Products labeled as "biodegradable" can take several months to decompose. Certified compostable plastic bags are designed to decompose in an industrial compost facility.

**5. *Can I put my pet's waste in the green cart?***

Pet and human waste are NOT accepted in this program. Pet waste, used bathroom tissue, diapers, toilet paper, and hair should all be placed in the Landfill container. This is to reduce possible bacteria in the finished compost.

**6. *How can I keep my food scraps pail clean?***

Try lining the pail with newspaper, paper towels, or a **compostable** plastic bag. Empty the pail into the Organics cart every few days to keep it fresh. You can also keep your pail in the fridge or freezer and empty the pail the day before your service day. Carts are serviced on Thursdays.

