

Organics recycling



Organics recycling involves collecting food scraps, non-recyclable paper and other compostable products to be recycled into compost at a large-scale composting facility. This process creates a nutrient-rich material that can be used in gardens and landscaping projects. Organics recycling is the best opportunity to reduce our trash – about 25 percent what we throw away is organic materials like food scraps and compostable paper. In order to be successful with organics recycling, it's important to understand why it's important, how it works, what is accepted, and how to get started.

Why organics recycling?

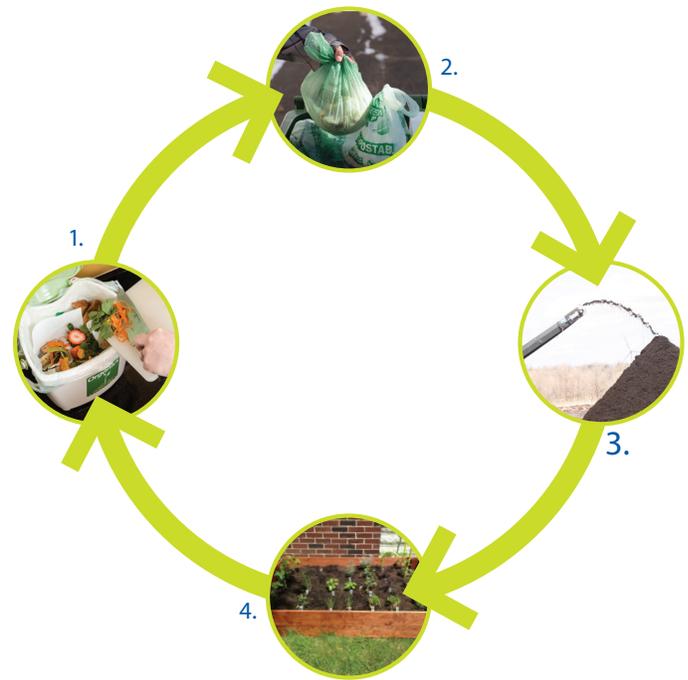
By participating in organics recycling programs, food scraps and non-recyclable paper products are recycled into compost – a valuable resource that improves soils, reduces soil erosion and decreases the need for chemical fertilizers. Organics recycling also helps to support a local economy since materials collected in programs are processed into compost in Minnesota.

How is organics recycling different from backyard composting?

The composting process at large-scale, commercial compost facilities reach higher temperatures than the process in backyard compost bins, so you can compost more materials in curbside organics recycling programs than backyard composting. The higher temperatures kill bacteria and break down items that cannot be composted in a backyard compost bin, including meat, bones, dairy products and compostable plastics.

Backyard composting is still a good option for recycling fruit and vegetable scraps and yard waste into a soil amendment that you can use right at home.

The organics recycling cycle



1. You separate your food waste and other compostable items into an organics container in your home.
2. You put your organics, bagged in certified compostable bags, into your cart or bring to a drop-off.
3. Your hauler picks up your organics recycling and brings it to a commercial composting facility, where the materials are recycled into nutrient-rich compost.
4. Compost is used in gardens, at farms, and in landscaping projects to add nutrients to the soil to help plants grow.

Please note this is generally the organics recycling process, and specifics of certain steps will differ based on your program.



Barriers and motivations to participating in organics recycling programs

Several research studies and surveys have provided insights into what people see as the benefits of organics recycling, what motivates them to participate, and what barriers they face to participation. Understanding the barriers and benefits that your specific audience faces is helpful to planning meaningful activities that will overcome barriers.

Organics recycling benefits

Organics recycling is the best opportunity to reach our recycling goals and is a surprisingly easy way to make a difference. It provides a “feel good” benefit, helps the environment, and results in a visible reduction in trash. Surveys have found that most residents who are not already participating in organics recycling programs consider it to be important, would likely participate, and have barriers that are not insurmountable.

Organics recycling barriers

However, specific strategies are needed to help people better understand why organics recycling is important and overcome barriers. Barriers to organics recycling identified through research include:

- **Costs:** not wanting to pay extra costs associated with fees for service and additional supplies
- **Concerns:** about pests, smells, and additional truck traffic
- **Logistics:** getting a system set up and making space to collect organics both inside and outside the home
- **Perceptions:** thinking that organics recycling is challenging, fear of doing it wrong, not thinking you generate enough organic waste to make a difference, or already doing backyard composting
- **Knowledge:** not having a complete understanding of what organics recycling is, why it's important, how to participate, or what materials are accepted
- **Motivation:** either not being interested in participating or being interested but needing a nudge to get started

Outreach can help overcome barriers

Respondents who already participate in organics recycling programs say participating is not very difficult, and they rated barriers of pests, smells, space, and time as low. This shows that outreach to address issues perceived to be barriers to organics recycling could go a long way in increasing participation and helping people set up organics recycling collection in their homes.

What is accepted for organics recycling?

All food

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and egg shells
- Pasta, beans and rice
- Bread and cereal
- Nuts and shells



Food-soiled paper

- Pizza boxes from delivery
- Napkins and paper towels
- Paper egg cartons



Certified compostable products

- Compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils and containers



Look for the term “compostable” or the BPI logo on certified products.



Other compostable household items

- Coffee grounds and filters
- Facial tissues
- Hair and nail clippings
- Cotton balls and swabs with paper stems
- Houseplants and flowers
- Tea bags
- Wooden items such as chopsticks, popsicle sticks and toothpicks



More about compostable products

Certified compostable products, including paper and plastic plates, bowls, cups, containers, and utensils, are accepted for organics recycling. Look for the term “compostable” or the BPI logo on certified compostable products.

Paper items that have a shiny or smooth surface, such as coffee cups, to-go containers, and ice cream tubs, likely have a plastic lining and are not accepted in the organics program unless they are identified as a certified compostable item.

If an item doesn't have the term “compostable” or the BPI logo and you're unsure whether or not it's compostable, it's best to put that item in the trash. This will help ensure the organics recycling is clean and free of contamination.

Getting started with organics recycling

Learn what's available and how your program works

- Figure out if collection service is available in your city by checking with your city or hauler. If collection service isn't available, see if there are drop-off options near you. An up-to-date list of drop-off locations can be found at hennepin.us/organics
- Find out what is provided and what is required. Do you get a new cart, compostable bags, supplies, etc.? What organics do you need to collect in compostable bags?
- Are there any extra fees, or are you already paying for the service? And by participating in organics recycling, can you reduce your trash enough to get a smaller trash cart, which will usually save some money?

Select an indoor collection container

There are many options for containers you can use to collect organics recycling in your home – some you may already have. You can use an ice cream pail, coffee can, or cottage cheese container. You can convert an existing garbage can into an organics container. Or you can purchase a kitchen pail from a grocery, hardware or retail store or order one online.



Start by collecting food, then add paper and other compostable items

Spoiled food and food scraps are the most common material in the trash, which makes them the most important material to start collecting for organics recycling. Keep a pail or other small container for collecting organics in a convenient location in your kitchen, such as on your counter or under the sink. Scrape food prep scraps and leftovers from your plate into your kitchen pail. Place spoiled or stale food from your fridge and cupboards in the pail as well.

Once you are comfortable sorting your food scraps, start collecting napkins, paper towels, tissues and other non-recyclable or food-soiled paper for organics recycling as well. You can also add certified compostable paper and plastic plates, bowls, cups, containers, utensils, and other products.

Put your bagged organics in your cart weekly

In most programs, organics must be placed in either brown paper bags or BPI-certified compostable plastic bags before being placed in your organics cart or collection container. This helps to prevent a mess in the cart, and for programs where organics are collected with trash, makes sure these materials can later be separated. Check on whether larger items such as pizza delivery boxes need to be bagged (this varies from program to program).

A note about compostable bags

Most programs require you to place organics in your cart in a compostable bag. In programs where organics are collected with trash, organics must be collected in certified compostable plastic bags that are typically provided by the city or hauler. In programs where organics are put in a separate cart, you can usually use either a paper bag or certified compostable plastic bag.

Look for the BPI logo on certified compostable plastic bags. If you are purchasing compostable plastic bags, remember that there are many different brands available. Compostable plastic bags are sold at most grocery, hardware and large retail stores. If you've used a bag that didn't work well for you, try another brand.

One option to avoid purchasing compostable plastic bags is to keep “wet” organics (such as food scraps) loose in a collection container and “dry” organics (like napkins and paper towels) in a paper bag. When you're ready to take the organics out to your cart, dump the wet organics on top of the dry organics.

Tips for collecting organics

Use a container with a vented lid

Vented containers allow moisture to evaporate, slowing down the decomposition process of the food in your organics recycling container. This will reduce odors and help your compostable plastic bags hold up longer. If you're purchasing a container, look for one with a vented lid. If you're making your own, simply poke holes in the lid.

Remove liquids

Liquids in your organics recycling container can speed up the decomposition of food and weaken compostable bags.

To avoid this, be sure to drain excess liquids before placing food scraps in your collection container. You can also place paper towels or newspaper at the bottom of your collection container to absorb liquids.

Keep your container in the fridge or freezer

Keeping your collection container in the refrigerator or freezer slows down the decomposition process, reduces odors, and prevents pests such as fruit flies. It can also help your compostable bags last longer.

Collect organics throughout your house

Although we generate the most organics recycling in the kitchen, there are opportunities to collect materials for organics recycling throughout the house. One idea for the bathroom: convert your bathroom trash container to an organics bin and clip a smaller cup to the bin to collect trash. Compostable items like tissues, Q-tips and cotton balls go in the organics compartment, while garbage items like dental floss go in the smaller cup.

Resources

hennepin.us/organics

Information about where organics recycling is available, where organics drop-off sites are located, and what is accepted in organics for composting.

hennepin.us/environmentaleducation

Information on tour options, bus funding, educational kits, educational pamphlet order form, and available grant funding.

hennepin.us/recycling

Order labels for countertop and other bins so that everyone knows where organics and recycling go at your home.

hennepin.us/businessorganics

Information for businesses about organics

GETTING STARTED – SETTING UP ORGANICS RECYCLING AT HOME

Once people have signed up for organics recycling, they are usually excited to get started. That's great! But just like starting any new habit, making sure they know exactly what they need to do to get started and breaking the habit into manageable tasks will increase their likelihood for success. Cities or haulers often provide residents with useful information and some supplies to get started, but there are usually things individuals need to do on their own to get set up. This activity will help anyone just getting started with organics recycling learn what they need to do, think through how they will set up organics recycling inside and outside their home, and make a plan to get started.

Outcomes

- Participants will understand what they need to do to set up organics recycling.
- Make a plan to get them started on the path to success.

Audience

Youth (ages 14+), adults

Time

30 - 60 minutes

Concepts

- You will need to make decisions and gather supplies to get organics recycling set up both inside and outside the home.
- Setting up convenient containers to collect organics recycling and making sure everyone in the household knows what is accepted will make it easier to participate.

Supplies

- Setting up organics recycling in your home presentation (.PPT) available at hennepin.us/environmentaleducation
- Examples of organics recycling supplies, including kitchen collection pails, compostable bags, compostable products, and residential labels
- Organics recycling planning worksheet
- Post-it note paper to be used for participant's commitments



GETTING STARTED – SETTING UP ORGANICS RECYCLING AT HOME

Preparation

- Gather examples of what people will need to successfully collect organics recycling in their homes. This could include small containers or kitchen pails for collecting organics recycling, compostable bags, examples of materials accepted for organics recycling, and labels for recycling containers.
- Review the setting up organics recycling in your home presentation
- Print an organics recycling planning worksheet for each participant.

Procedure

- Share the organics recycling in your home presentation with the participants. Optional: make it interactive by printing each slide of the presentation and have the participants present the information to each other.
- Have participants work individually, in pairs, or as a group to complete the setting up organics recycling planning worksheet. Even if participants are already participating in organics recycling, there is usually something they could be doing to maximize participation or further reduce waste.
- Ask participants to share what actions they commit to taking. If possible, ask participants to write down their commitments on a Post-it and put it on a wall where everyone can see them.
- Have participants view the wall and talk with each other about the commitments they see. Is there anything more they'd like to commit to doing? Are there any commitments they have questions about or that they're not ready to take on just yet?
- Optional: follow up (two to three weeks after workshop) to see how everyone is doing, if they need any assistance or further information, and if there are any new commitments they are ready to take on. Have participants take a photo to share with the group and/or post on social media of what their set up looks like at home. This could include both their set up inside their homes and their outside carts.
 - If you conduct this training in the future, use these photos in your presentation.

Discussion questions

- What steps do you need to take to get organics recycling set up at home? If you are already participating in organics recycling, what actions will you take to improve your home set up or maximize your participation?
- What did you learn that was new or surprising?
- What did you learn that you want to share with someone else? Who will you share it with?
- What are you still unsure about? What do you want to learn more about?

Additional activity ideas

Where to put the organics container? Planning room-by-room

Have participants take a look at real or sample room layouts – including the kitchen, bathroom and outside spaces like the yard, driveway or garage. You can find sample layouts online – just search for kitchen layouts or blueprints, for example – or ask participants to take a photo of their own kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor spaces to share with the group. Working in pairs or small groups, have participants identify where organics collection containers could go in each room or outdoor space. Participants could circle all the potential places to put organics collection containers or provide them small photos of indoor organics collection containers and carts to place on the photos. Ask the pairs or groups to share their ideas with the full group.

Resources

Handouts

- Residential organics recycling guide
- Minneapolis home set up tips (<http://minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste/organics/home-set-up-tips>)
- Residential organics recycling labels (order athennepin.us/recycling)

KNOW WHAT TO THROW

Many people think they know everything that can be put into an organics recycling bin but then are surprised to learn that some items have been added to organics recycling programs while other items are a problem in the composting process. Sorting through compostable and non-compostable materials is a simple, fun, and eye-opening way to engage people in learning more about organics recycling.

Outcomes

Participants will learn what can and can't be put into organics recycling bins.

Audience

Youth (ages 5+), parents and children

Time

20 - 30 minutes

Concepts

- Many things can be composted in organics recycling programs. Some additional materials are now accepted in organics recycling programs while others have been removed from the accepted list. The basic list of what items are accepted for organics recycling is consistent throughout Hennepin County and the metro area.
- Some materials cannot be accepted in organics recycling programs because they will not break down properly in large-scale composting operations.
- Recycling organic materials into compost conserves energy and natural resources and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.



Supplies

- Multiple examples of the following items:
 - **Organics recycling:** all food; non-recyclable paper like napkins, paper towels and tissues; certified compostable products with the term “compostable” or the BPI logo on them; and other compostable household items such as coffee grounds and filters. Plastic food toys can be used to represent food that easily spoils; nuts, pasta, and grains are good items to use that don't spoil as easily. Pictures of food are also great when working on a limited budget or timeline. Refer to the “additional activities” section for an option to make your kit reflect waste composition in Hennepin County.
 - **Recyclables:** office paper, newspaper, magazines, phone books, cereal, cracker or pasta boxes, cardboard rolls from toilet paper/paper towels, plastic bottles, clear plastic cups, plastic containers, metal food cans, pop cans, glass bottles and jars, and cartons.
 - **Trash:** food/candy wrappers, gift wrap, frozen food boxes, broken toys, Styrofoam™ cups, to-go food boxes, microwave meal trays, to-go coffee cups, items labeled as “biodegradable”
- Containers for sorting recyclables. Boxes, bins, bags or laundry baskets work well.
- Coloring materials (crayons, colored pencils, etc.)
- Handout: Organics Recycling Guide
- Handout: Recycling Guide (optional)

KNOW WHAT TO THROW

Preparation

- Collect and clean common items that can and cannot be put into organics recycling programs (see a list under supplies, and get more ideas from the Organics Recycling Guide.)
- Put example items from the trash, recycling and organics into a container that can be used as a sorting kit.
- Create as many sorting kits as you need. It's ideal to work in groups of about five. See additional activity ideas for variations for larger groups.
- Make sure that each sorting kit has the same general types of recyclable, organics and trash items and is of similar difficulty.

Procedure

- Split your audience into groups of about five participants each. Distribute the sorting kits: one to each group.
- Have the groups work on sorting the materials into trash, recycling and organics items, focusing on what you can put into organics recycling bins. You can provide organics and recycling guides or signs to help people determine what goes where.
- There are many different ways to make this activity engaging for your audience. You can set it up as a game show, timed race, team-building activity or other sort of contest. See additional activity ideas for more details on these additional options.
- As a large group, go through a sorting kit explaining what materials should be put in the organics recycling bin. Encourage participants to ask questions and discuss options. If you're unsure about something, follow up with Hennepin County at environment@hennepin.us to get an answer.
- Some items aren't accepted in organics recycling bins because they cause problems in the composting process. For example, food containers and utensils that don't have the term "compostable" or the BPI logo on them are not accepted in organics recycling programs.
- Learn how to dispose of specific items with the Green Disposal Guide at www.hennepin.us/greendisposalguide

Discussion questions

- What did you learn that was new? What items can you put in an organics recycling bin that you didn't realize were accepted before this activity?
- Were there any materials that you thought you could go into organics recycling bins that are actually not accepted? Since these materials generally go in the trash, are there ways you could avoid using them in the first place?
- Are there any materials you are confused about?
- Why are organics composting programs important?
- Why do you think some people decide not to do organics recycling? What would help them start?
- What did you learn that you want to share with someone else? Who will you share it with?
- How can you incorporate what you learned to set up an organics recycling system in your home? What would a home system look like?
- What do you want to learn more about?

KNOW WHAT TO THROW

Additional activity ideas

Waste composition sort

When gathering materials for the sorting activity consider having the quantities of trash, recycling, and organics reflect the composition of materials disposed of in Hennepin County. Use the following percentages to help you figure out how many of each type of item (trash, recycling, organics) you should include in your kit.

- 55% Recyclables
- 20% Food waste (use real food, plastic food, or images of food)
- 10% Compostable materials (paper towels, napkins, certified compostable products)
- 15% Trash

If you have a kit with 50 items, you should have this composition: 28 recyclable items, 10 food waste items, 5 compostable material items, 8 trash items.

Relay race

Teams can use a relay race to fuel friendly competition. Have teams race to see who can sort the items correctly the fastest. Assign a time penalty for each incorrect item.

Circle up

Have participants stand in a circle and give one item to each person. Go around the circle and have each participant say whether they think their item is trash, recycling or organics. Discuss with the group the correct answer and ways to reduce waste in the home.

Waste audit

Examining what materials are being put in the trash or recycling at your house or facility is an eye-opening way to understand your recycling system and identify opportunities to improve.

- Put on protective gear such as rubber gloves and take a look in your trash, organics and recycling bins. Note what kinds of recyclables are in there and calculate the percentage of trash that could be recycled. Use this information to improve recycling within your household or your group's facility. For example, place signs on organics bins of all the items that are accepted and place reminders on the trash bin to only throw away things that are truly garbage.
- If you're doing a waste audit at home, ask participants to take a look at what is going in the trash versus what is getting recycled in different areas of their homes, including the kitchen, office, bathroom and laundry room.
- As a group, discuss what opportunities there are to recycle organics more. Order labels for participants to put on their trash and recycling bins at home at hennepin.us/recycling.

Resources

Handouts

hennepin.us/environmentaleducation, under communication resources and print materials

- Organics recycling guide (available in English or translated in Hmong, Lao, Oromo, Spanish, Somali, and Swahili)
- Recycling guide (available in English or translated in Cambodian Khmer, Hmong, Lao, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Thai and Vietnamese)

Stickers for household waste containers

- Order at hennepin.us/recycling

Education kits and activities

- Recycling sorting activity: includes three color-coded and labeled bins (trash, recycling, and organics) and items you can or cannot recycle or compost in an organics program. A guide is attached to each bag with the answer key.
- Organics education kit: this kit includes information on curbside organics programs and several activities.

BUT WHAT IF I'M WRONG?

Many people are afraid that they will make a mistake and put the wrong items into their organics recycling bins. This activity will work through the tricky items, discuss what bin they should be put in, and help reassure participants about what is accepted. Although confusing items do exist, food waste alone makes up about 20 percent of what we currently put in the trash. So only putting food waste in organics recycling rather than the trash makes a significant difference.

Outcomes

- Participants will be comfortable sorting waste for organics recycling.
- Participants will be reassured that if they only put food waste into organics recycling containers they are still making a large impact.
- Participants will learn tips for identifying additional materials that are accepted for organics recycling, but when they have any doubt, they should throw it out.

Audience

Youth (ages 13+), adults

Time

20 - 30 minutes

Concepts

- Certified compostable products are accepted for organics recycling. These products have been tested to ensure they will break down properly at a commercial composting facility. Look for the term "compostable" or the BPI logo on certified products.
- There are numerous unregulated words that do not mean items are compostable. These include words like "biodegradable," "oxo-degradable," "natural," and "made from plants."
- If in doubt, a large impact can be made by putting all food waste into the organics bin and disposing of the rest as trash.

Supplies

- Examples of confusing items: to-go coffee cups and covers, to-go food boxes, clear beverage cups, straws, disposable flatware, and wax paper
 - If possible: track down a "trash" and an "organics" version of each item



BUT WHAT IF I'M WRONG?

Preparation

- Collect and clean common items that can and cannot be put into organics for composting programs (see a list under supplies, and get more ideas from the Organics Recycling Guide.)

Procedure

- Talk with your audience about organics items and how there are some tricky items when it comes to choosing which disposal option – trash, recycling, organics – is the correct one. Start off by reassuring participants that while these tricky items do exist, food waste alone makes up about 20 percent of the trash. So, disposing of only food waste in an organics bin makes a significant difference. Being unsure about these tricky items is okay. The main take-away once this activity is complete is that participants know how to differentiate items, know that putting food waste in the organics recycling bin makes the biggest difference, and “when in doubt, throw it out.”
- Split your audience into groups of about five participants each. Distribute two to three items to each group.
- Have the groups work together to decide which of their items can be put in organics bin and which cannot. You can provide organics recycling guides or signs to help people determine what goes where.
- There are many different ways to make this activity engaging for your audience. You can set it up as a relay race, team-building activity or any other sort of contest. See additional activity ideas for more details on these options.
- As a large group, go through the items explaining what materials should be put in the organics bin. Encourage participants to ask questions and discuss options. If you're unsure about something, follow up with Hennepin County at environment@hennepin.us to get an answer.
- Using the organics recycling guides, discuss how you can determine if a product is a certified compostable product that can go in the organics bin.
- Some items aren't accepted in organics recycling because they cause problems in the composting process. Items that do not have the term “compostable” or the BPI logo are not accepted in organics programs. If a plate, cup, bowl, utensil, takeout container or other item doesn't indicate that it's certified compostable, it's best to put that item in the trash so it doesn't contaminate the organics recycling.
- All food waste can be composted via organics recycling. Have participants use the “organics decision tree” activity to help them decide what to do with confusing items.

Discussion questions

- What did you learn that was new? What items can you put in an organics bin that you didn't realize were accepted before this activity?
- Were there any materials that you thought you could go into organics bins that are actually not accepted? Since these items need to go in the trash, what could you do to avoid using them in the first place?
- Are there any materials you are confused about?
- Why are organics composting programs important?
- Why do you think some people decide not to do organics recycling? What would help them start?
- What did you learn that you want to share with someone else? Who will you share it with?
- How can you incorporate what you learned to set up an organics recycling system in your home? What would a home system look like?
- What do you want to learn more about?

BUT WHAT IF I'M WRONG?

Additional activity ideas

Game show

Have participants form groups of two to three. Blindfold one participant per group. The blindfolded person will then ask questions about the "mystery" item that their group-mates are holding. For instance: "is it food?" "does it say 'compostable?'" etc. Once the blindfolded person feels comfortable with what bin the item should go in, another group-member can be blindfolded. Repeat this activity until all items have been sorted through or until you feel the group has a good handle on what to look for when deciding which bin an item should go in.

Relay race

Teams can use a relay race to fuel friendly competition. Have teams race to see who can sort the items correctly the fastest. Assign a time penalty for each incorrect item.

Team-building

Have participants work together to create a project from the items that end up in the trash category after the waste sort. Examples include creating the tallest structure, a model that represents something else or forming a band that plays instruments made from non-recyclable materials.

Circle up

Have participants stand in a circle and give one item to each person. Go around the circle and have each participant say whether they think their item is accepted in organics recycling or not. Discuss with the group the correct answer and ways to reduce waste in the home.

Resources

Handouts

order at www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation, under communication resources and print materials

- Organics recycling guide (available in English or translated in Hmong, Lao, Oromo, Spanish, Somali, and Swahili)
- Recycling guide (available in English or translated in Cambodian Khmer, Hmong, Lao, Russian, Spanish, Somali, Thai and Vietnamese)

Stickers for household waste containers

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Education kits and activities

- **Recycling sorting activity:** includes three color-coded and labeled bins (trash, recycling, and organics) and items you can or cannot recycle or compost in an organics program. A guide is attached to each bag with the answer key.
- **Organics learning kit:** this kit includes information on curbside organics programs and several activities. The kit includes the supplies needed to carry out this activity. An inventory is also available so you could make your own.

THE PATH FROM CURB TO COMPOST

Putting food and compostable products into your organics recycling bin is the start of a journey that ends in compost being used in a variety of ways that improves our soil. This is the reason that many people participate in organics recycling – it puts our trash to better use by recycling it into a nutrient-rich soil amendment. But people who are just starting organics recycling and possibly even those that have been doing it for a while may not understand the full process that materials put in an organics recycling bin go through to be recycled into compost. In this activity, participants will work together to research and tell the story of organics recycling from when it leaves the curb to when it becomes finished compost.

Outcomes

- Participants will learn what happens at each stage of the organics recycling process.

Audience

Youth (ages 12+), adults, parents and children

Time

30 - 60 minutes

Concepts

- Organics recycling puts our food scraps and compostable paper and products to better use by recycling them into compost.
- Materials collected for organics recycling are sent to a large-scale composting facility where they are turned into compost that can be used in a variety of garden and landscaping projects.
- Putting the correct materials in organics recycling is important to ensure the finished compost is clear of contaminants.

Supplies

Be creative with the supplies you gather. The more plentiful the resources, the more interesting and interactive the stories participants tell will be. Supplies you may need include:

- Computer with internet access to conduct research and develop presentation
- Art supplies including poster board, photos, markers and crayons to create visual displays
- Optional: Props to correspond with each chapter in the story
 - Collecting organics recycling at home chapter: countertop organics collection bin, toy or real food examples, compostable bags
 - Traveling from curb to compost chapter: toy organics collection truck, image of an organics collection truck, map showing your community with the path to the compost site traced
 - Recycling organics into compost chapter: image or drawings of a compost site, toy front end loader
 - Closing the loop by using finished compost chapter: bag or container of finished compost
- Educational resources such as the organics recycling guide, organics activities introduction section, organics educational kit (available for reservation) or others listed under resources to help groups conduct research.
- Optional: printed photo cards with information for each chapter



THE PATH FROM CURB TO COMPOST

Preparation

- With your participants, decide how you are going to present your story. Options for presenting the story include (but are not limited to):
 1. Create posters or a group mural to visually demonstrate the organics recycling journey
 2. Create a presentation
 3. Select a character (such as an apple core or banana peel) and develop a story about the character's journey
 4. Act out a skit
 5. Develop a game show
- Depending on how you plan to present the story, gather supplies the participants will need.
- Review the resources section and determine which research resources the group will need to develop their story.

Procedure

- Split participants into four teams. Each team will take on or be assigned a different chapter of the story of organics recycling. The chapters are:
 1. Collecting organics recycling at home
 2. Traveling from curb to compost site
 3. Recycling organics into compost
 4. Closing the loop by using the finished compost
- Have each group research their topic and develop their part of the story. You can provide the groups the photo card with information about their topic or have them conduct their own research with the following questions as a guide:
 1. Collecting organics recycling at home
 - What is and is not accepted for organics recycling?
 - What is the most prevalent and important material to put in organics recycling?
 - How do you know if a food container or utensil is ok to put in organics recycling?
 - Where can you collect organics recycling in your home?
 - How do you sign up for or participate in organics recycling?
 2. Traveling from curb to compost site
 - How do you need to collect the organics recycling in your home to get it ready to be picked up by your hauler?
 - How often is organics recycling picked up?
 - How do you have to prepare your organics recycling to get it ready to be picked up by your hauler?
 - What kind of composting facility does the organics recycling go to? Why does organics recycling need to go to this type of facility, and how is organics recycling different than backyard composting?
 - Where are organics recycling site located? Tell us a little bit about these sites.
 3. Recycling organics into compost
 - From getting dropped off to becoming finished compost, how does the composting process work?
 - What are some problematic materials in the composting process?
 4. Closing the loop by using finished compost
 - What are the benefits of using compost?
 - What are some ways that compost is used?
 - Where can you get compost?
- Have each group share, present or perform their part of the story.

THE PATH FROM CURB TO COMPOST

Discussion questions

- What did you learn that was new? What was the most interesting or surprising part of the organics recycling story?
- Based on what you learned, why do you think organics recycling is important?
- What are you going to do differently now that you better understand the organics recycling and composting process?
- What did you learn that you want to share with someone else? Who will you share it with?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Additional activity ideas

Tour a composting facility

Touring a composting facility allows participants to see in person how a large-scale composting facility works. Tours are offered at the Mulch Store/SET site in Rosemount and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux site in Shakopee. Hennepin County funding available to cover the costs of bus transportation for groups to take environmental field trips. Learn more at www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation.

Resources

Collecting organics recycling at home

- Handout: Residential organics recycling guide available at www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation
- Hennepin County organics recycling webpage: www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/organics-recycling
- Hennepin County organics recycling kit, available for reservation at www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation
- Hennepin County waste sort information (available at www.hennepin.us/solidwasteplanning)
 - Factsheet: www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/your-government/projects-initiatives/documents/waste-sort-factsheet.pdf
 - Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=abSlptamlZQ&feature=youtu.be
- City of Minneapolis organics recycling video: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/organics/WCMS1Q-074522
- City of Minneapolis frequently asked organics recycling questions: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/solid-waste/organics/organics-faq

Traveling from curb to compost site

- City's website or city recycling contact (find contact info at www.hennepin.us/recycling)
- The Mulch Store/SET: www.mulchstoremn.com
- Mdewakanton Sioux compost facility: www.smscorf.com

Recycling organics into compost

- Fox9 news segment about composting at SET: <https://vimeo.com/182631595>
- Ramsey/Washing County BizRecycling organics recycling video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAVA8eT-Zcw&feature=youtu.be
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency composting video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=nlhh0CUIPsw&feature=youtu.be

Closing the loop by using the finished compost

- U.S. Composting Council benefits of compost factsheet: www.mulchstoremn.com/compost%20assets/Compost%20Benefits.pdf



Collecting organics recycling at home

What is and is not accepted for organics recycling?

All food is accepted for organics recycling, including fruits, vegetables, bread, grains, meat, bones, dairy products, nuts and shells. Food-soiled and non-recyclable paper, including napkins, paper towels, tissues, pizza boxes from delivery and paper egg cartons are also accepted.

You can also put certified compostable products in the organics recycling. This includes compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls and utensils that have the BPI or Cedar Grove logos or the word compostable on them.

A few other items, including coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, houseplants and flowers, and wooden items like chopsticks and toothpicks are also accepted.

Important things not to put in organics recycling include animal and pet waste, diapers, cleaning and baby wipes, dryer lint and sheets, plastic bags, Styrofoam, and recyclable items like cartons, glass, metal, paper and plastic.

What is the most prevalent and important material to put in organics recycling?

Food is the most important material to put in the organics recycling. Food waste is the most common material in the trash – making up about 19 percent of the average household's trash.

It is also by far the most common material in organics recycling. Of all the materials accepted for organics recycling in the average household, more than half of it is food.

How do you know if a food container or utensil is ok to put in organics recycling?

Look for the BPI or Cedar Grove logos or the word "compostable" on the food container or utensil. Products labeled "biodegradable," "oxodegradable," or "natural" are not certified compostable and are not necessarily accepted in organics recycling.



Many paper food containers or cups have a shiny coating that is plastic and not compostable unless it has a certified logo. When in doubt, it is best to throw a food container or utensil in the trash to avoid contaminating the compost.

Where can you collect organics recycling in your home?

Much of the organic recycling in your household will be generated in the kitchen, so that's the best place to start. Other areas of the house to consider collecting organics is the bathroom (tissues, paper towels, cotton balls, cotton swabs with a paper stem, hair and animal fur are all compostable), bedrooms (for tissues and any food waste), and office (shredded paper can go in the organics).

How do you sign up for or participate in organics recycling?

Check with your city or hauler to see if they offer organics recycling, if you are already paying for the service or if there's an extra cost, and how you get signed up. Several cities like Minneapolis, Medina, St. Louis Park and Wayzata have programs where you are already paying but need to opt in to participate.



Traveling from curb to compost site

How do you need to collect organics recycling in your home to get it ready to be picked up by your hauler?

It's best to check with your hauler or city for specific details about your program. Most programs require that materials like food waste, paper towels and tissues, and compostable products be collected and placed in the cart in compostable bags.

These can include either paper bags or certified compostable plastic bags with the BPI logo. There are many different brands and sizes of compostable bags available, so try a few to see what works well for you.



Some programs allow larger items like pizza boxes from delivery to be placed directly in the organics recycling cart without being put in a bag.

How often is organics recycling picked up?

How often organics recycling is picked up will depend on your program. Most cities and hauler pick up organics recycling weekly. Some programs have a separate cart for organics recycling, some co-mingle the organics with yard waste, and some have you put your compostable bags of organics in with your trash.

What kind of composting facility does the organics recycling go to? Why does organics recycling need to go to this type of facility, and how is it different than backyard composting?

Organics recycling is delivered to a large-scale, industrial composting facility.

Large-scale composting sites reach higher temperatures than backyard composting, meaning they can break down more materials.

Backyard composting is good for composting yard waste like leaves and grass clippings and fruit and vegetable scraps right at home to use in your yard or garden. Large-scale composting facilities can accept all food, including meat, bones and dairy products, as well as compostable plastics.

Where are organics recycling sites located? Tell us a little bit about these sites.

Organics recycling in Hennepin County is sent to the Mulch Store/SET composting facility in Rosemount or the Mdewakanton Sioux composting facility in Shakopee.

The Mulch Store/SET sells landscaping materials including compost and mulch. They operate four yard waste sites, and additionally accept organics recycling at their site in Empire Township (Rosemount)

The Mdewakanton Sioux's organics recycling facility is part of the Dakota tradition of caring for the earth. They accept organics recycling and yard waste from nearby cities. They produce compost, mulch, and compost blends. They have solar panels onsite to help power their facility.

Both of these sites offer tours for the public and groups to learn more about the organics recycling process.



Recycling organics into compost

From getting dropped off to become finished compost, how does the composting process work?

At the composting site, the organics are dumped and inspected to make sure they don't contain too many contaminants (like plastic and glass). The organics are then shredded and mixed with yard waste to get the correct mixture of nitrogen (provided by the food waste) and carbon (provided by yard waste) as well as the right moisture level. This mixture is then laid down in rows and aerated to ensure the right level of oxygen.

Microorganisms like bacteria go to work turning the organics recycling into compost. This process heats up the pile to over 130 degrees Fahrenheit. The combination of microorganisms, moisture, air and time turns the organic waste into compost. After about six months, the organics and yard waste mix has been recycled into compost.

The organics recycling/yard waste mix and the compost is tested to ensure the material is safe to use.

The finished compost is screened to remove as many contaminants, such as plastic bags and wrap, glass and metal cans, as possible.

What are some problematic materials in the composting process?

Common problem materials – or contaminants – in the composting process include plastic materials, glass and metal.

These are problematic because they do not break down and can be difficult to screen out, degrading the quality of the finished compost.

Plastics in particular is one of the biggest sources of contamination that compost facilities see, and it's hard for them to remove it.

Some ways to avoid putting problem materials in the organics recycling include:

- Collect your organics in certified compostable bags – either certified compostable plastic bags or paper bags. Look for the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) logo on certified compostable bags. Never put plastic bags in with your compost.
- Be aware that many “paper” products, like paper cups, plate and bowls, actually have a plastic lining and should not go in the compost. If your paper cup, plate or bowl has a shiny or glossy coating and is not certified compostable, put it in the trash. And if you're not sure if an item is compostable, it's best to put it in the trash. Remember that the most valuable material we can put in our organics recycling bins is food scraps, and the plastic lining on paper products can contaminate the compost.
- Put your more traditional recyclables like plastic cups and bottles and metal cans in your recycling bin. That way these materials can be recycled into new products instead of contaminating the compost.



Closing the loop – using finished compost

What are the benefits of using compost?

Recycling organics puts our trash to better use by turning it into valuable compost, which has many benefits.

- Improves soil and reduces erosion: Adding compost to soil improves soil structure, increases the capacity of the soil to hold water, and makes the soil more permeable – meaning more water can infiltrate into the soil. All of this helps to reduce erosion and runoff.
- Helps plant growth: Compost adds nutrients to soil, helping with plant growth.
- Reduces emission associated with landfilling waste: Organic materials decomposing in landfills generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Diverting organics to composting helps to eliminate methane emissions from landfills.
- Improve carbon sequestration: Using compost increases carbon storage in soil and improves plant growth, further increasing carbon sequestration. Soils are the largest source of carbon storage in the world, but soil erosion has decreased those benefits.
- Supports a local economy: Minnesota's composting industry supports about 700 jobs and produces \$148 million in gross economic activity per year. The composting industry supports four to eight times more jobs on a per ton basis than landfilling operations.

What are some ways that compost is used?

Compost is used in a variety of ways, including:

- Restoration of stream banks and shorelines
- Landscaping along road construction projects
- Community, corporate gardens and school gardens
- Community events
- Home yards and gardens

Where can you get compost?

Compost is sold in bags at many local nursery and hardware stores.

TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON ORGANICS RECYCLING CONCERNS

Many people who are new to organics recycling have concerns that may prevent them from participating. They worry that the organics recycling will smell or attract pests. They may also think they don't have room to collect organics recycling both inside and outside their home. They may face issues with the durability of compostable bags, and many people are not diverting as much materials as they could to organics recycling. This activity is designed to help participants understand the many options available for addressing these common concerns related to organics recycling.

Outcomes

- Participants will learn that there are many possible solutions to address common concerns about organics recycling.

Audience

Youth (ages 14+), adults

Time

45 - 60 minutes

Concepts

- People often have concerns when they are getting started with organics recycling. These concerns are often greater for people who are just getting started, and are not as big of an issue for people who have been doing organics recycling for a while.
- There are many potential solutions for each organics recycling concern. People can try a solution that they think will work best for them, then try something else if that doesn't solve the issue.
- In many cases, a solution for one organics recycling concern will also help address other concerns.

Supplies

- Organics recycling concern cards (each group will get 1 concern)
- Organics recycling solution cards (each group will get one set of the solutions)
- Poster with all of the organics recycling concerns and solutions or other way to display the groups' findings



GETTING STARTED – SETTING UP ORGANICS RECYCLING AT HOME

Preparation

- Print out and cut up the organics recycling concern and solution cards. Each group will be assigned a different organics recycling concern, and each group should get one full set of solutions.
- Prepare a poster board or other way to visually display the groups' findings. For example, make a matrix with concerns listed across the top and all potential solutions listed along the side. Make a check mark for each the solution a group suggests for their assigned concern.
- Limited time tip: if you are limited on time, only distribute the solutions cards and have teams work together to figure out what concerns they are addressing. Skip the poster board portion as well.

Procedure

- Split your group into five teams of three to five people each. Assign each group a different organics recycling concern and provide each group with a set of all of the potential solution cards. You could also do the reverse, and provide each team with solutions cards and have them figure out the problems they are solving.
- Give the groups time to go through the potential solutions/concerns and determine which ones apply to their concern/solution. Ask each group to select a spokesperson to present their solutions to the group, or they could have the entire group present.
- Have each group present their findings, explaining briefly why they think each solution helps to address their concern. The facilitator can help guide the discussion by referring to the troubleshooting organics discussion guide. The groups or facilitators should also put checkmarks under their concern for the potential solutions they identified, or someone otherwise visually display their solutions.
- Review the visual display of the concerns and solutions as a large group. Discuss how some solutions help to address multiple concerns. Ask participants to share any personal stories they have with troubleshooting organics recycling issues and if they have anything to add. Ask participants to share what actions they plan to take as a result of this activity.

Discussion questions

- Do you have any experience with these concerns or solutions to share? Do you have anything to add?
- What did you learn that was new or surprising?
- Are there any solutions you are going to try as a result of this activity? What do you commit to try in regards to organics recycling?
- What did you learn that you want to share with someone else? Who will you share it with?
- What do you want to learn more about?

Resources

Online and downloadable resources

City of Minneapolis

- Organics recycling FAQs: <http://minneapolismn.gov/solid-waste/organics/organics-faq>
- Indoor collection tips (<http://minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-183303.pdf>)
- Outdoor collection tips (<http://minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@publicworks/documents/webcontent/wcmsp-183305.pdf>)

Handouts

Order online at www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation

- Residential organics recycling guide

Recycling labels

Order residential recycling, organics and trash labels at www.hennepin.us/recycle

Organics recycling activity

Troubleshooting organics recycling: activity answer sheet and discussion guide

Below is more information about each of the organics recycling concerns and answers. Review this with your participants after they complete the troubleshooting activity. Remember that some answers apply to multiple concerns. Encourage participants to share their own experiences and ideas as you review the answers.

Attracting pests

Many residents are concerned that participating in organics recycling may attract pests – both inside and outside their homes. It is important to remember that the materials collected for organics recycling are the same stuff currently being thrown in the trash. Any issues with pests they currently have with trash and recycling containers are likely to continue with the addition of organics recycling. And pests are generally attracted to the smelly food scraps in the organics, so finding ways to eliminate, neutralize or mitigate the attraction to food scraps is key. Fortunately, there are many strategies they can try to address potential issues.

- Putting a cup of apple cider vinegar and dish soap near your organics container acts as a fruit fly trap.
- Keeping food items, especially, fruits, meat and bones, in your fridge or freezer until close to your collection day reduces rotting food, which is attractive to pests. For example, flies are particularly attracted to protein, and, not surprisingly, fruit can attract fruit flies.
- Placing something heavy on the lid of your organics recycling cart or securing it shut with bungee cords can help keep raccoons, squirrels and other pests out. Just be sure to remove the objects before your collection day!
- Storing your organics recycling cart in your garage, if possible, will make it harder for pests to access it.
- Cleaning your cart occasionally with a mix of vinegar and water can help clean out food residue and reduce flies and pests. You can also try sprays to target specific pests; for example, a mix of cayenne pepper, vegetable oil and dish soap will help keep squirrels out, and raccoons are repulsed by the smell of ammonia.
- Putting your cart out for pick up on every pick up day, no matter how full it is, will make sure that food scraps aren't sitting inside the container for too long attracting animals and insects.
- Taking steps to prevent food waste will reduce the amount of food waste you have to manage, meaning less opportunities to attract pests both inside and outside your home.
- Taking organics out to your cart regularly will reduce the risk of attracting pests inside your house.
- Cleaning out your fridge close to collection day reduces the amount of time that spoiled or rotting goods spends in your indoor and outdoor collection containers – reducing the time it can attract pests.

Smells

Decomposing food in organics recycling containers produce the most odors, so staying on top of managing food waste and slowing the decomposition of food is important.

- Keeping wetter organics like fruit, vegetable scraps and meat trimmings in the fridge or freezer until close to your collection day will slow or stop the decomposition process and reduce smells.
- Using a vented collection container in your kitchen will allow food scraps to get more oxygen, slowing down the smelly decomposition process.
- Taking your organics recycling out to your cart regularly will reduce the length of time food scraps decompose in your kitchen. The less time your food scraps spend decomposing in your kitchen, the less odor they'll produce.
- Cleaning out your fridge and getting rid of any spoiled food close to your collection day will minimize the amount of time that smelly food waste sits in your collection container or organics recycling carts.
- Taking steps to prevent food waste will minimize the amount of rotten food you need to manage with your organics recycling service.
- Putting your cart out for pick up on every pick up day, even if it's not full will make sure that your food waste gets taken away as soon as possible.
- Cleaning your cart occasionally with a mix of water and vinegar will prevent any smelly food residue from building up in your cart.
- Draining liquids before putting food scraps in your collection container will slow the decomposition process and reduce smells.

Compostable bags don't hold up

Many people struggle with compostable bags that break down before taking their organics outside to their collection cart. This is especially discouraging because compostable bags are an added costs when it comes to participating in organics recycling. There are many strategies to try to use a few compostable bags as possible and ensure the ones you do use hold up.

- Trying different brands will help you determine which ones performs best in your specific situation. If you can only find a limited selection at your grocery, hardware, or home goods store, try ordering some online.
- Collecting organics loose in your kitchen collection container and bagging them when you're ready to bring them out to the cart will reduce the amount of time organics sit in the bag and should make your bags last longer.
- Lining the bottom of your collection container or compostable bag with paper towels or newspaper can help soak up liquids, which often cause compostable bags to break down.
- Draining liquids before putting food scraps in your collection container can help prevent compostable bags from breaking down.
- Keeping wetter organics in the fridge or freezer will slow the decomposition process and help your bags hold up longer.
- Using a vented collection container in your kitchen allow food scraps to get oxygen – slowing the decomposition process that can make your bags break down faster.
- Taking organics out to your cart regularly prevents food waste from breaking down the compostable bags in your smaller containers.
- Taking steps to prevent food waste can leave you with less organics to manage, reducing your need for compostable bags and reducing wetter, decomposing food that tends to cause compostable bags to break down.
- Cleaning out your fridge close to collection day reduces the amount of time that spoiled or rotting good sits in the compostable bags in your collection containers.

- Knowing which items you need to put in compostable bags may help you save space in the bags. For example, Minneapolis allow participants to place pizza boxes from delivery directly in their organics recycling carts without being placed in a bag.

Not recycling as much organic material as you can

Participants may be doing the basics of organics recycling by diverting most of their food waste, but there are things everyone can do to make sure they are putting as much as possible in their organics recycling bin.

- Using certified compostable foodservice items, including plates, cups and utensils, will reduce what you throw in the garbage. Remember, using reusable items is preferable to compostable.
- Collecting organics in additional rooms in your house beyond the kitchen will expand the amount of materials you collect for organics recycling. For example, materials accepted for organics recycling commonly generated in the bathroom include tissues and cotton swabs with paper stems. You may also want to add an organics recycling container in bedrooms, the living room or the office.
- Revisiting the list of materials accepted for organics recycling will help ensure that you are diverting as much as you can. When you first start organics recycling, you may be focused on the basics of food waste. But once you've got that down, make sure you're also putting materials like paper towels, napkins, coffee ground, and tissues in the organics recycling bin.
- Having well-labeled collection containers will help make sure that everyone in your household and your guests know what materials to put where.
- Getting everyone in your household involved is important to making sure you're putting as much in your organics recycling bins as possible. Revisit the list of what is accepted for organics recycling and remind each other why organics recycling is important to you to stay motivated. You can even have some fun with it by creating your own recycling labels together, or making organics recycling a game or challenge.

Making space for organics recycling containers and carts

Adding extra collection containers in your home and an extra cart outside (depending on your program where you live) can be a key challenge with organics recycling. Although the right approach will vary with every situation, there are many creative solutions to making organics recycling work.

- Keeping a small collection container on your counter, on a shelf, in a cabinet or in another convenient location in your kitchen means you don't have to find space for another, larger bin.
- Converting your existing garbage can to an organics bin and using a smaller trash bin means you don't have to add another large container and will help you realize the full waste-reduction benefits of organics recycling.
- Using only an organics bin in rooms like the bathroom and clipping a small container for non-compostable items to the bin will eliminate the need to add another collection container to a small space while making sure you add organics recycling throughout your home.
- Downsizing to a smaller garbage cart can help you make room for your organics recycling cart and will likely save you money.
- Taking organics out to your cart regularly helps ensure that your indoor collection containers don't become overflowing and means you can have smaller indoor collection containers.
- Taking steps to prevent food waste means you have less organic waste to make space to collect.
- Putting your cart out for pick up on every pick up day even if the cart is not full will ensure you have plenty of space to collect organics recycling.

Solutions that address many issues

When reviewing the visual display of the concerns and their potential solutions, you should notice that several of the solutions address multiple issues. Some key solutions that address multiple concerns include:

- Keeping wetter organics in the fridge or freezer addresses concerns about pests, smells, compostable bags not holding up and making space for organics recycling carts and containers.
- Taking steps to prevent food waste addresses concerns about pests, smells, compostable bags not holding up and making space for organics recycling carts and containers.
- Taking your organics recycling out to your cart regularly addresses concerns about pests, smells, compostable bags not holding up and making space for organics recycling carts and containers.
- Cleaning out your fridge close to your collection day addresses concerns about pests, smells and compostable bags not holding up.
- Putting your cart out for pick up on every pick up day even if it's not full addresses concerns about pests, smells and making space for organics recycling carts and containers.

Participants may identify additional solutions for their given concern or come up with their own, which may mean that more solutions will address multiple concerns in addition to the solutions listed above.

Pests

9 potential solutions

Smells

8 potential solutions

Compostable bags don't hold up

10 potential solutions

Not recycling as much organics as you can

5 potential solutions

Making space for organics recycling carts and containers

7 potential solutions

Put a cup of apple cider vinegar mixed with dish soap near your organics container

Keep wetter organics like fruit, vegetable scraps and meat trimmings in the fridge or freezer until close to your collection day

Try different brands

Place something heavy on the lid of your organics recycling cart or secure it shut with bungee cords

Use compostable products

Use a small collection container on your kitchen counter, on a shelf, or in a cabinet

Store your organics recycling cart in the garage

Clean your cart occasionally with a mix of water and vinegar

Put your cart out for pick up on every pick up day, even if it's not full

Take steps to prevent food waste

Use a vented collection container in your kitchen

Take your organics recycling out to your cart regularly

Clean out your fridge close to your collection day

Collect organics loose in your kitchen collection container and only bag when you're ready to bring them out to the cart

Drain liquids before putting food scraps in your collection container

Line the bottom of your collection container with things like paper towels or newspaper

Revisit the list of materials
accepted for organics
recycling

Know which items you need
to put in compostable bags

Have well-labeled collection
containers

Collect organics in
additional rooms in your
house

Convert your existing garbage can to an organics bin and use a smaller trash bin

Use only an organics bin in rooms like the bathroom and clip a small container to it for non-compostable items

Get everyone in your household involved

Downsize to a smaller garbage cart

Create your own solution:

Create your own solution:

Create your own solution:

Create your own solution: