



# Organics recycling basics

Hennepin County Environment and Energy



# What is organics recycling?

- You collect food scraps, non-recyclable paper and compostable products around your home
- These materials are picked up by a waste hauler and delivered to an industrial compost site
- The organic material are recycled into compost, a nutrient-rich soil-like materials that can be used in gardens and landscaping projects



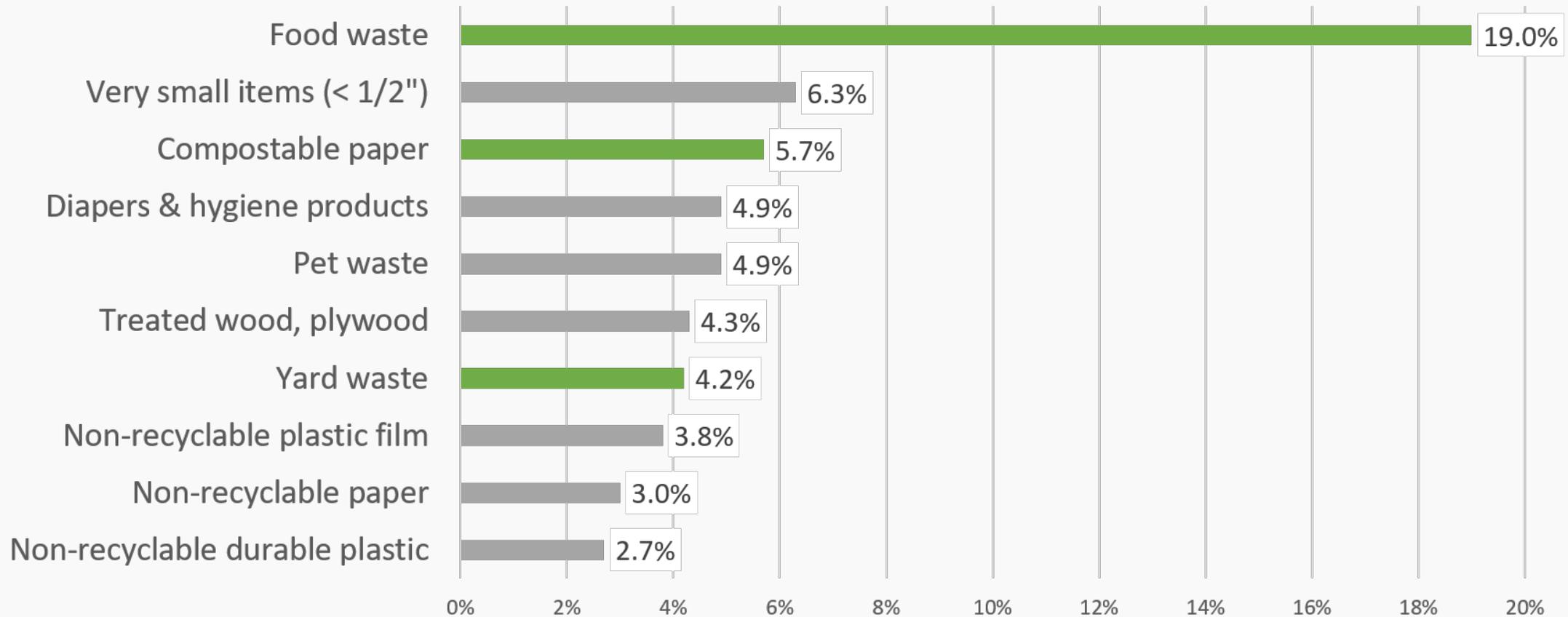
# Why is it important?

- Best opportunity to reduce our trash
- Puts our trash to better use by recycling it into a valuable resource
- Improves soil and protects the environment
- Supports a local economy

Give back  
to nature with  
**organics  
recycling**



# Organics are the most common material in the trash



Hennepin County 2016 residential waste sort data shows that nearly 25% of household trash is material accepted for organics recycling.

# How do I get started?

- Learn how your program works
  - Check with your city or hauler for details
  - Find out what is provided: an extra cart, compostable bags, supplies to get started?
  - Are there extra fees, or are you already paying for the service?
- Sign up and get the supplies you need to participate



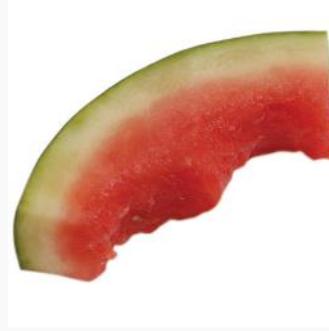
# What is accepted for organics recycling?

- All food
- Non-recyclable and food-soiled paper
- Certified compostable products
- Other compostable household items



# What is accepted for organics recycling?

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



# What is accepted for organics recycling?

- Non-recyclable and food-soiled paper
  - Pizza boxes from delivery
  - Napkins and paper towels
  - Paper egg cartons



# What is accepted for organics recycling?

- Certified compostable products
  - Certified compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils and containers
- Looks for the BPI or Cedar Grove logos or the term "compostable" on certified products



# What is accepted for organics recycling?

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



# What is **not** accepted?

- Keep these items out of the organics recycling:
  - Animal and pet waste, litter or bedding
  - Cleaning or baby wipes
  - Diapers and sanitary products
  - Dryer sheets
  - Grease or oil
  - Plastic bags and Styrofoam
  - Products labeled “biodegradable”
  - Recyclable items, including cartons, glass, metal, paper and plastic
  - Yard waste (depending on your program)

# How does organics recycling work?

- The organics you collect at home are:
  - Picked up by hauler
  - Delivered to a large-scale, industrial compost site



# At the compost site, the organics are:



Mixed with yard waste to get the correct ratio of carbon and nitrogen and the right moisture levels



Laid out in piles



Aerated to introduce oxygen



Left to compost and cure – a 6 or so month process in which bacteria is working to heat the pile and break down materials

# Before it's ready...

- The compost is screened to remove contaminants
- Common contaminants include:
  - Plastic bags and wrap
  - Small plastic items
  - Glass



# Finished compost is used in a variety of projects, such as:



School gardens



Road  
construction



Landscaping  
projects and  
community  
events

Learn more

[www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/organics-recycling](http://www.hennepin.us/residents/recycling-hazardous-waste/organics-recycling)