Organics Recycling Guide

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

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

Not accepted:
Yard waste • diapers and sanitary products • animal and pet waste, litter or bedding • cleaning or baby wipes • grease or oil • Styrofoam™ • dryer lint and dryer sheets • recyclable items (cartons, glass, metal, paper, plastic) • frozen food boxes • microwave popcorn bags • gum • fast food wrappers • products labeled “biodegradable”

Get labels for your home
Container labels help everyone in your household know which materials to put in the organics recycling, recycling and trash bins. Order the labels pictured at minneapolismn.gov/organics.

Right-size your garbage cart
By participating in organics recycling, you may be able to reduce your trash enough to switch to a small garbage cart. This change will save you $3 per month.

Organics are a resource, not a waste! By participating in the organics recycling program, your food scraps and non-recyclable paper products are put to better use by being recycled into compost – a valuable resource used in landscaping and road construction projects.

Figuring out how to get started with collecting organics recycling at home can be a challenge. This guide includes useful tips to help you make the most of the organics recycling program.

Find a detailed yes/no list and additional home set up tips at minneapolismn.gov/organics
Getting started with organics recycling

1. Select an indoor collection container
   There are many options for containers you 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.

2. 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.

3. Put your bagged organics in your cart weekly
   Organics must be placed in either brown paper bags or BPI-certified compostable plastic bags before being placed in your green organics cart. This helps to prevent a mess in the organics cart. Larger items such as pizza boxes from delivery and paper egg cartons do not need to be bagged for collection.

A note about compostable bags
   Although organics must be bagged when placed into your green cart, you can choose whether to line your indoor collection container with a compostable bag or wait to put organics in a bag right before you bring them out to your cart.
   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.
   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. Remember that the BPI logo must be on certified compostable plastic bags.

More about compostable products
   Certified compostable products, including paper and plastic plates, bowls, cups, containers, and utensils, are accepted for organics recycling. Certified compostable products must have the BPI or Cedar Grove logo on them or the term “compostable” to be accepted.
   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 plastic item. If an item doesn’t have one of these logos 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.

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.