

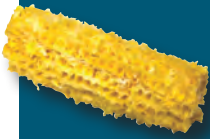
# The Denver COM-POST

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## Boost Your Winter Composting

Winter is a great time to intensify your composting efforts by discovering new materials that can go in your green cart. The holiday season is an especially great source of compostable materials.

There's no shortage of kitchen scraps around the holidays. Put food scraps such as **carrot peelings, corn cobs, eggshells, coffee grounds, and even turkey carcasses (bones and all)** to good use and compost them in your green cart. Go ahead and include any leftovers such as **gravy, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and green bean casserole.** And if nobody else wants that fruitcake, we'll compost it for you!



Capture other compostable items from around your home, such as **dead houseplants & flowers, natural wreaths (with decorations removed), gourds, corn husk, sunflower stalks, pinecones, straw, vines, leaves and hedge prunings.**

Plenty of other items can be composted as well. **Candy canes, stale cookies, burnt toast, moldy bread, popcorn and sour dairy products** can all be added to your green cart. Even out of date processed foods can be composted, just be sure to remove all the packaging.



Christmas trees are collected separately and mulched through the **TREecycle** program and should not be placed in your green cart. Visit **DenverGov.org/DenverRecycles** for information on when and how to recycle your Christmas tree.



## Denver Composts Now Accepting eCheck Payments



**Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT)**, also known as eCheck payments, are secure and

efficient transactions sent electronically to bank accounts within the United States. EFT payments eliminate the need to write checks and avoid postage costs. Compost service subscribers choosing this payment option should first contact their financial institution to confirm they offer EFT transactions and if there are any associated costs to the payee for this service. For Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Authorization Instructions check the back of your compost invoice or visit **Denvergov.org/Compostpaymentinfo.**

**Important:** We ask subscribers that have previously set up payments to Denver Compost through their bank's "Bill Pay" service to discontinue this payment procedure and use the eCheck payment method instead.

**Questions about what can go in your green cart?**



Visit **DenverGov.org/DenverRecycles**, email **DenverRecycles@DenverGov.org** or call 311 (720-913-1311)

*(Para la información en Español llame al 311 (720-913-1311) or visite DenverGov.org/DenverRecycles/sp)*

# Common Compost Collection Questions

## 1.

**Can I share the compost collection service with a neighbor?**

**YES.** Sharing the use of a single green compost cart between

neighbors is a great idea for homes producing smaller volumes of compostable materials. For record keeping and payment

purposes, the green cart will need to be officially assigned to just one home and account number.



## 2.

**What is the difference between “Biodegradable” and “Compostable”?**

“Biodegradable” means that the product, over an unspecified amount of time, will break down into carbon dioxide, water and biomass. There is no legal enforcement or definition for the term “biodegradable” and the term has been used loosely by some manufacturers. “Compostable” products are biodegradable, but with the added benefit of releasing nutrients when they break down. Compostable products are commonly made out of corn, potatoes or sugarcane, degrade within a relatively short period of time and produce no toxic residues. Compostable materials can be put in your cart. Biodegradable materials cannot.”

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## 3.

**Can I put waste from my vacuum into the compost cart?**

**NO.** Waste from your vacuum cleaner should not be placed in your green compost cart. Even though a large percentage of this material may be pet hair or other compostable materials, a small percentage may send undesirable materials like synthetic carpet fibers into the compost mix. Tiny bits of plastic and metal are often scooped up by vacuums as well. These undesirable materials will not decompose and are detrimental to the composting process.

## 4.

**I’m moving. Can I transfer my compost service to the new address?**

Please contact Solid Waste Management prior to moving to determine if the new address is



located within a compost collection area. If it is, then yes services can be transferred.

Solid Waste Management staff can work with you on how to have the green cart relocated, provide your new account number and let you know about any service changes.

# Go Inside an Active Compost Pile

By participating in the compost collection program you are doing your part to supply the organic matter that contains the carbon and nitrogen elements necessary for the composting process. But what happens next?

On arrival at the compost facility the organic material is shredded into smaller pieces to increase the surface areas and speed up the composting process. Moisture and oxygen (from turning the pile) are introduced into the composting pile to accelerate the decomposition process.

**Microorganisms** such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa and actinomycetes are the real

workers in the compost process by breaking down complex organic compounds into simpler substances. As the bacteria and microorganisms decompose the materials, they release heat. This natural process of decay is called aerobic (with oxygen) decomposition and this is how



materials are converted back into usable nutrients for plants.

As the temperature of the compost pile decreases, larger organisms come in to feed on the pile’s earlier inhabitants.

**Microorganisms**, such as centipedes and soil mites, help decomposition in a similar way by “chomping” organic matter into smaller and smaller bits.

In its final state of decomposition the material is called humus. This stabilized organic matter (compost) can then be used to improve the physical properties of soil. Adding compost to soil aids in improving water retention and soil aeration, and compost supplies essential nutrients for plant growth. **Compost is a soil conditioner, mulch and fertilizer all wrapped into one.**