

The Denver COM-POST

A Biannual Newsletter of the Denver Composts Program • December 2016

Leave Plastic Milk Cartons and Ice Cream Tubs **OUT** of Your Green Cart

When the Denver Composts program was first launched the information labels on top of the green carts listed milk cartons and ice cream tubs as acceptable material. This has changed! **Paper cartons and tubs are no longer accepted in the green cart.** Instead, recycle these items in your purple cart as these paper items hold more value when recycled into new paper products, so please do **not** put milk cartons and ice cream tubs in your green cart.

COMPOST

Plain paper plates and napkins



RECYCLE

Cartons, such as milk, juice or ice cream cartons



BPI®

When choosing paper products that you know will end up in your compost cart, look for items with the BPI® logo, which means the product has been certified as compostable.

Fight Holiday Food Waste



During the winter you may find your household overloaded with food scraps and leftover food. If there's no more room left in your refrigerator or the food has spoiled, then compost this food waste in your green cart. Everything from toothpicks to turkey carcasses (bones and all) are accepted in the Denver Composts program.

Don't forget to capture and compost food scraps, such as carrot peelings and eggshells, which are often generated when preparing holiday feasts. Old popcorn, leftover stuffing, stale cookies and even unwanted fruitcakes can go in your green cart. Even some natural holiday decorations, such as pine cones and flowers can be composted.

Please make sure you remove all packaging from processed foods before putting the food in your green cart.



QUESTIONS?

Not sure why your green cart wasn't emptied this week? Wondering how to transfer your compost service to your new address? Don't know if something is compostable or not? Confused about your compost billing? **We can help you with all these questions.**



We Can Help!

Please don't delay in letting us know about any service problems you experience. The sooner we are notified of an issue, the sooner we can help to resolve the issue and provide you with the best possible service. To report any service problems or ask questions, call **311** (720-913-1311) or email DenverRecycles@DenverGov.org.

Some commonly asked compost related questions are available to you at DenverGov.org/Compost.



FROM YOUR COMPOST CART TO FINAL PRODUCT

After your green cart is emptied, the yard debris and food scraps are hauled to a commercial composting facility operated by A1 Organics in Keenesburg, Colorado. At this facility, the organic material is ground into fine pieces by an industrial grinder. Smaller pieces help to speed up the decomposition time. The material is then placed into long narrow piles called “windrows” that are turned on a regular basis to enhance aeration. To ensure that pathogen destruction takes place and that the compost reaches appropriate nutrient values,

A1 Organics maintains its compost windrows between 90 to 120 days under controlled temperatures and conditions. When the composting process is complete, an independent laboratory performs analytical tests on the compost samples supplied by A1 Organics. This final testing and documentation ensures that the compost is a quality product, meets industry regulations and is ready to be sold on the open market. Much of the finished product is sold to local farmers and retailers.

Did You Know Composting Helps Reduce Global Warming?



Organic material like food, yard debris and non-recyclable paper makes up more than 50% of what Denver residents send to the landfill. When this organic material decomposes in landfills, it releases methane which is a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent in its heat trapping capabilities than carbon dioxide. Not surprisingly, the EPA has identified landfills as one of the largest producers of methane. Because methane is so much more damaging than carbon dioxide, the benefits of keeping organic material out of the landfill through composting are far greater than just saving space in the landfill. By subscribing to the Denver Composts program, **you helped keep more than 7.6 million pounds of organics out of the landfill in 2015, which equates to preventing over 400,000 pounds of methane from being released into our atmosphere.** Thank you for doing your part!

For a list of the other benefits to composting, visit DenverGov.org/Compost.

Buying and Using Compostable Bags

Using compostable bags for food scraps is a good way to keep your kitchen pail and compost cart clean and odor free. With so many products available, consumers must be careful to purchase bags that are truly compostable. **Only purchase and use certified compostable bags that are made from plant-based materials and carry the official BPI® logo** (Biodegradable Products Institute). These bags have been tested to ensure that they will compost quickly, completely and safely. These bags are generally green in color to make it easy for the composting processor to distinguish them from non-compostable plastic bags.

Regular plastic bags or other bag types that claim to be degradable are often NOT compostable and should never be placed in your green cart.

Trusted compostable bag brands include BioBag®, Bag-To-Nature®, Glad Compostable®, BioSak®, EcoSafe®, EcoGuard® and Nature-Friendly®. Compostable bags may be purchased online and at Whole Foods, King Soopers, Safeway and other stores.



There's no reason to keep Denver Composts a secret. In fact, feel free to let your friends and neighbors know how easy it is to participate in the program and encourage them to sign up.

