

ORGANICS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - Last updated March 29, 2022

Why are we collecting organic waste now?

The State of California set a goal to reduce 75% of the organic waste (food scraps and yard waste) sent to the landfill by 2025. This goal will help us reduce the quantity of greenhouse gasses emitted by food and plant waste rotting in landfills. Instead, the organic waste will be transformed into compost.

Do we have to pay for the new organic/food scrap service?

No. This service is provided at no additional cost to customers.

How will we be receiving our green carts and when will we start putting our food and yard waste in the green bin?

The green organics cart will be delivered throughout the city in phases starting in April 2022. By July 2022 all residents will be participating in the program. Along with your new cart, you will receive a notice in the mail alerting you that your bin has been delivered and that you can start to place food and yard waste in the green organics cart.

I have a green yard waste bin — can I start putting food scraps in it now?

Please do not put food scraps in your yard waste bin until you receive a notice from us letting you know that you can start. This program will be rolled out to the city in phases starting in April. By July 2022 all residents will be participating in the green bin program. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

How often will my green organics cart be picked up?

Your outdoor cart will be picked-up once a week on the same day as your regularly scheduled garbage day.

What types of organic wastes are accepted in my green organics bin?

Food scraps and yard waste, including:

- Fruits & vegetables
- Bread, pasta, & other grains
- Dairy products
- Eggshells
- Coffee grounds & paper coffee filters
- Paper tea bags (no staples)
- Cooked meats & bones
- Shellfish
- All prepared foods
- Grass clippings
- Weeds
- Flowers
- Leaves & branches

What can't I put in my green organics bin?

- NO Liquids

- NO Raw meat
- NO Food packaging
- NO Pet waste
- NO Paper products (napkins, plates, cups, tissue, or food-soiled paper)
- NO Plastic or plastic bags
- NO glass or metal
- NO Compostable plates, cups, utensils or bags of any kind
- NO Palm leaves or bamboo
- NO Dirt or rocks
- NO Succulents, cactus, yucca
- NO Poison oak nor genista (broom plant)

What happens to my food scraps and yard waste after they are collected?

Organic waste is hauled to Monterey County and processed to produce nutrient-rich compost that will be reused in home gardens, parks and agriculture

Can I bag my organics before putting them in the bin?

Please do not place any types of bags (paper, plastic, nor biodegradable) in the green organics bin.

Do I need to wash my outdoor cart?

Rinsing your outdoor green bin is optional. If you choose to do so, please do not empty dirty water down your driveway or sidewalk.

How should I collect food scraps in my kitchen?

1. Find a container (preferably with a lid) to keep on your kitchen countertop or near your kitchen sink to collect food scraps.
2. Collect all food scraps in a container in your kitchen and empty it as needed into your green organics cart. Do not use any type of bag or plastic.
3. Add yard waste, if any, and put the cart out on the curb every week on the same day as your gray garbage cart, even if it is not full, to prevent any odors.

How do I keep smells and animals away from my cart?

- Leave liquids and raw meat out of green organics carts.
- When possible, layer your food scraps with yard trimmings and keep a bucket of dry leaves, pine needles, straw, or wood shavings nearby to cover your food scraps.
- Rinse your green cart with water when necessary and pour it onto your lawn — never onto the street or down a storm drain (they go directly to our sloughs!).
- Sprinkle smelly containers with baking soda to neutralize odors.

I compost in a home composting bin. Can I waive my green cart service?

No. State regulation SB 1383 and City ordinance 6.10 requires residents to participate in the green organics bin program. You may still use your home compost bin; but you must also have a green organics bin service. Different rules apply for businesses:

<https://www.cityofwatsonville.org/670/Business-Food-Scrap-Collection>

Am I required to have this green organics bin?

Yes, all residents in California cities are required to separate organics such as food waste, plant waste and yard waste into their green cart rather than their gray cart. These plants, food and yard waste are no longer allowed in the gray trash bin. By 2024, the city is required to fine residents and businesses that are out of compliance.

What if my green organics cart breaks or does not close?

Contact Customer Service at (831) 768-3133 to report broken or malfunctioning carts.

Whom can I contact if I have additional questions?

If you have additional questions, email food.scrap@cityofwatsonville.org, or contact Customer Service at (831) 768-3133.