

GOING GREEN



A guide to using your
new curbside composting
collection service

3-1-1 | Austin Recycles App
austintexas.gov/composting

USING YOUR GREEN COMPOSTING CART IS EASY!



STEP 1

Place food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard trimmings in your green composting cart. If it grows, it goes! See pages 6-7 for a list of accepted materials.



STEP 2

Set out your green cart **EVERY WEEK** by 6:30 a.m. on your collection day, even if it isn't full.



STEP 3

Make sure everything fits in the green cart with the lid closed, and keep the lid closed at all times.

HOW WILL MY OTHER CARTS AND COLLECTIONS BE AFFECTED?

Yard Trimmings

Now place grass clippings, leaves and small branches directly in your **GREEN** composting cart. Fill your cart first. Use lawn-and-leaf bags for excess only.

Trash

Instead of placing food scraps and food-soiled paper into your brown trash cart, place them in your **GREEN** composting cart.

Recycling

No changes! Continue to place recyclables, like hard plastics, glass, metals, cardboard and paper, loose in your **BLUE** recycling cart.



FROM GREEN CART TO COMPOST

The materials in your green cart do not go to a landfill! They are composted into a natural resource!



1

Austin Resource Recovery staff collects the material from your green composting cart and transports it to a local commercial composting facility.



2

The material is placed in a large pile, where microorganisms begin to break it down and heat up the pile to very high temperatures.



3

After about 12 months, the material breaks down and is transformed into an earthy, soil-like material called compost.



4

Compost is used to fertilize plants, gardens and other outdoor areas.

BPI-CERTIFIED COMPOSTABLE BAGS

BPI-Certified compostable bags have been tested and approved by Biodegradable Products Institute scientists to ensure they will break down completely, quickly and safely during the composting process. Look for the BPI logo on the box when purchasing compostable bags.



SAVE MONEY WITH YOUR GREEN CART!



After putting food scraps and food-soiled paper in your composting cart, you likely will have less trash to throw away each week. This may allow you to downsize to a smaller, less expensive trash cart and save money on your monthly utility bill! We offer four trash cart sizes – the smaller the cart, the less it costs. To downsize your trash cart, call 512-494-9400.

COLLECTING YOUR FOOD SCRAPS

Collect food scraps in a kitchen collector for an easy way to set aside leftovers for your green composting cart. Coffee cans or food storage containers can also be used as compost collectors.



STEP 1

Keep your kitchen collector in a convenient location in your kitchen, such as on the countertop, under the sink or in the freezer.



STEP 2

While cooking or cleaning up, place leftover food scraps and food-soiled paper into your kitchen collector.



STEP 3

Empty the contents of your kitchen collector into your green cart before you set out the cart each week.

AVOID THE “ICK” IN YOUR KITCHEN COLLECTOR

These tips may help reduce odors:

- Line your kitchen collector with a BPI-certified compostable bag, paper bag or newspaper to absorb moisture and manage odors in your kitchen collector.
- Collect food scraps in a cereal box or tissue box. Be sure to remove any plastic lining.
- Wrap food scraps in a paper towel or old newspaper.
- Sprinkle baking soda inside of the kitchen collector.
- Wash your kitchen collector in the dishwasher or by hand after emptying it into your green cart.
- To reduce odors in your kitchen, try freezing food scraps like meat, poultry and fish in your kitchen collector or other reusable container, paper or BPI-certified compostable bag until it's time to place scraps in your green cart.

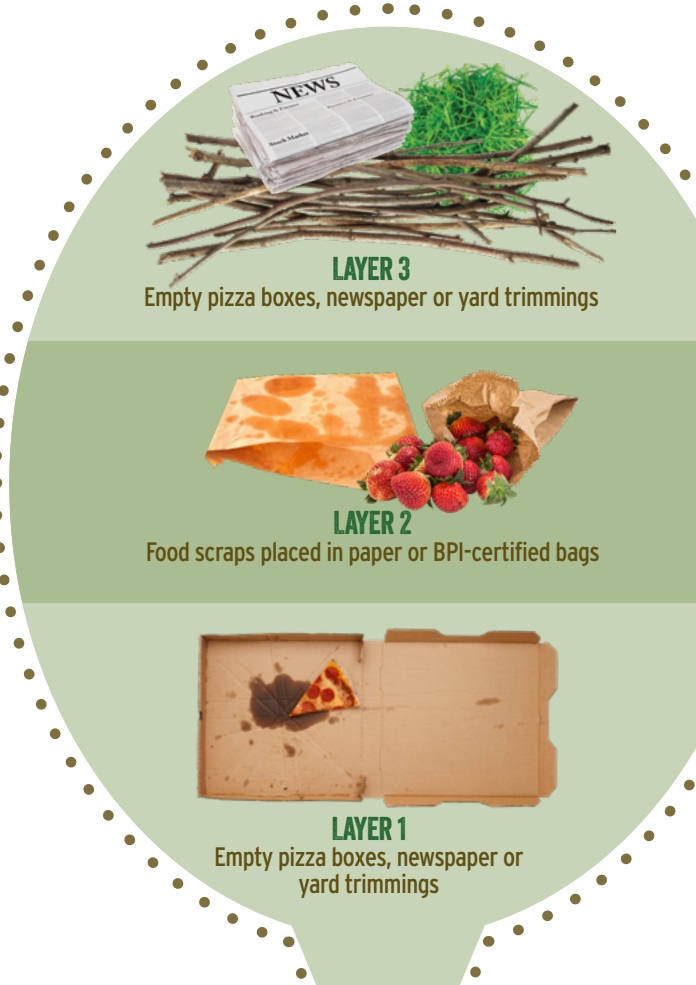


FILLING YOUR GREEN COMPOSTING CART

Instead of placing food scraps and food-soiled paper in your trash cart, now place them in your green composting cart. Place yard trimmings directly in the composting cart, and use lawn-and-leaf bags for excess only. Always keep glass and plastic out!

Tips to help reduce odors, moisture and pests in your green composting cart:

- Layer your food scraps with yard trimmings inside the cart.
- Place yard trimmings directly in your cart.
- Place yard trimmings, newspaper or a pizza box at the bottom of your cart to absorb moisture.
- Place food scraps in BPI-certified compostable bags or paper bags to prevent scraps from sticking to the cart.
- Keep your food scraps frozen and place them in your cart the night before your collection day.



KEEPING YOUR GREEN CART CLEAN

- Rinse your cart with mild soap and water when necessary. Tip: Be sure to pour the dirty water onto the lawn and not down a storm drain!
- Sprinkle baking soda in your cart.
- Keep the cart lid closed at all times.
- Set out your cart every week.
- Keep your cart in a shaded area.
- Line the cart with leaves, paper or pizza boxes.



WHAT GOES INTO YOUR GREEN COMPOSTING CART

If it grows, it goes!

FOOD SCRAPS

Cooked or raw meat, poultry and seafood (including bones), cheese, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, grains, pasta, eggshells, bread, coffee grounds, tea bags, tea leaves, baked goods, nuts, jelly, candy, snack foods, leftovers, spoiled food.

How to Collect

- Use a kitchen collector, see page 4.
- Place in a BPI-certified compostable bag, a paper bag, or other paper collector.
- Place in green cart.

What to Avoid

Do not include liquids, fats, oils, grease, plastic, glass, metals, styrofoam.



YARD TRIMMINGS

Grass clippings, small branches, small tree limbs, tree roots, flowers, leaves, plants, straw.

How to Collect

- Place yard trimmings directly in your cart (loose or in paper bags). Ensure the lid closes.
- **Fill your cart first.** If you are unable to fit all of your yard trimmings in your cart:
 - Bag extra yard trimmings in lawn-and-leaf paper bags and place at the curb.
 - Bundle and place small branches and tree limbs (no longer than 5 feet and 3 inches in diameter) at the curb.

What to Avoid

No rocks, soil, or tree stumps.

KEEP THESE ITEMS OUT OF YOUR GREEN CART!

Prohibited items cannot break down into nutrient-rich compost and can cause a safety hazard for collection crews. Check the list below to find out what to keep out of your green cart:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| • Aluminum | • Cigarette butts & ashes | • Fats, oils, grease | • Hazardous waste |
| • Animal carcasses | • Clothing | • Glass | • Kitty litter |
| • Ceramics | • Diapers | • Glossy paper | • Landscape timbers |

FOOD-SOILED PAPER

Paper bags, paper napkins, paper towels, paper plates, paper cups, paper take-out containers and take-out boxes (with no plastic or wax coating, and with metal removed), pizza boxes, coffee filters, microwavable popcorn bags, newspaper, tissues.

How to Collect

- Paper can be dry or wet.
- Place directly in your green cart, or place in a paper bag.

What to Avoid

Do not include glossy paper or window envelopes; recycle these items in your blue cart instead.



NATURAL FIBERS

Popsicle sticks, sawdust (in paper bags), shredded paper, toothpicks, wooden chopsticks, untreated wood.

How to Collect

- Place directly in your green cart, or place in a paper bag.

What to Avoid

No cotton balls or cotton swabs.

For a complete, up-to-date list of accepted materials, visit austintexas.gov/composting

- Liquids
- Medical waste
- Metal
- Pet waste
- Plastic bags
- Plastic containers
- Plastic Straws
- Rocks
- Styrofoam
- Trash
- Tree stumps
- Treated or painted wood
- Wine corks
- Cotton balls or swabs



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

My green composting cart isn't full. Should I still set it out at the curb?

Yes. No matter how full your green cart is, the City encourages you to set it out every week to help keep it clean. Crews will still collect your green cart, regardless of the amount of compostable material.

What should I do with extra yard trimmings that won't fit in my green cart?

First, be sure to put as many of your yard trimmings as possible inside your green cart. The lid must be able to close. Consider saving excess leaves and grass clippings to layer with food scraps in the future. If you have more yard trimmings than will fit in your green cart, then you may put them in lawn-and-leaf paper bags or in a reusable container no larger than 34 gallons. You may also set out small branches (no longer than 5 feet or thicker than 3 inches in diameter) in manageable bundles at the curb. Extra yard trimmings will be collected at no extra charge.

What happens to the compost at the end of the process?

The City contracts with a local company to process the compost. The company will sell the compost and it will be used on local lawns, gardens and outdoor areas.

Why is it important to keep unaccepted items out of the green cart?

Unaccepted items, like plastic bags, bottles and glass, do not break down naturally and cause significant problems for the composting process. Some items also cause a safety hazard for collection crews. It is important to keep out unaccepted items so they do not contaminate the compost or cause injury.



Keep these items out of your green composting cart!

See pages 6-7 for a list of prohibited and accepted materials.

LEARN MORE!

For instructional videos, downloadable resources and tips for cleaning your cart, visit austintexas.gov/composting or call 3-1-1.