

# GOING GREEN



A Guide to Using Your  
New Curbside Composting  
Collection Service

[austintexas.gov/austincomposts](http://austintexas.gov/austincomposts) | 3-1-1



# USING YOUR GREEN COMPOSTING CART IS EASY!



## STEP 1

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



## STEP 2

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



## STEP 3

Make sure everything fits in the cart when the lid is 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, in your **BLUE** recycling cart.





# FROM GREEN CART TO COMPOST

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



1

Austin Resource Recovery staff collects materials in your green cart and transports them to a local commercial composting facility.



2

Materials are placed in a large pile where microorganisms begin to break down the materials and heat up the pile to very high temperatures.



3

After about 12 months, materials break down and transform 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 the 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 reusable container in the kitchen for an easy way to set aside leftovers for your green cart. Coffee cans, plastic food storage containers or compost collectors can be used.



## STEP 1

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



## STEP 2

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



## STEP 3

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

# AVOID THE “ICK” IN YOUR KITCHEN COLLECTOR

These tips may help reduce odors in your kitchen collector:

- 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.



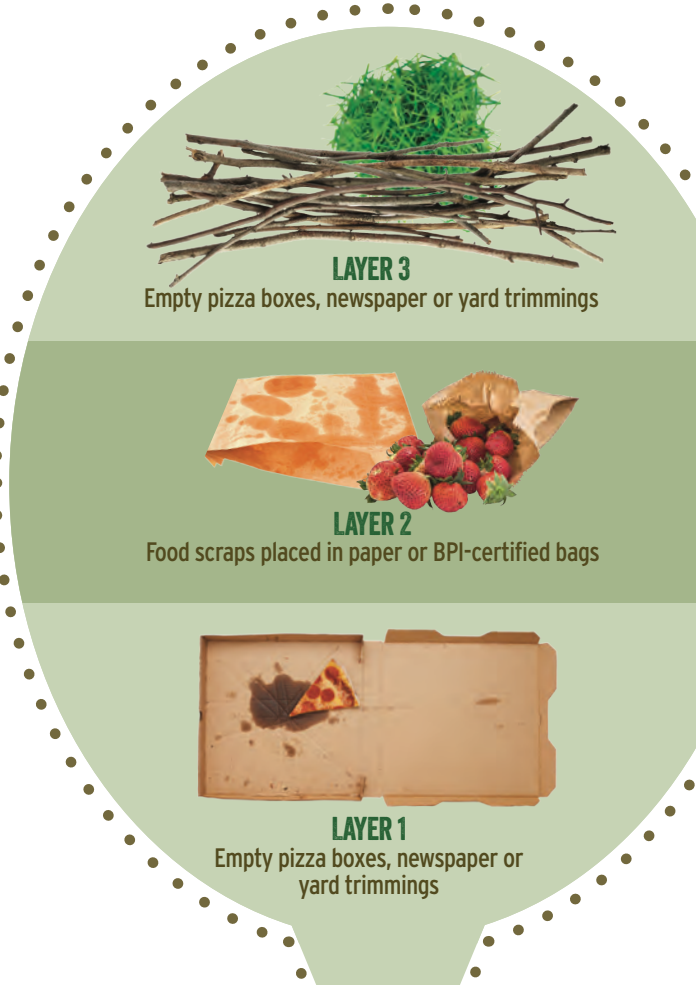


# FILLING YOUR CART

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

## Tips to help reduce odors, moisture and pests:

- 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 green cart the night before your collection day.



# KEEPING YOUR 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 lid closed at all times.
- Set out your cart every week.
- Keep your cart in a shaded area.
- Line with leaves, paper or pizza boxes.





# WHAT GOES INTO YOUR GREEN 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

- Collect in a reusable container
- Place in an BPI-certified compostable bag
- Place in 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, or 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 and ashes | • Diapers            | • Glossy paper      |
| • Animal carcasses | • Clothing                  | • Fats, oils, grease | • Hazardous waste   |
| • Ceramics         |                             | • Glass              | • 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), 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

Cotton balls, 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

For a complete, up-to-date list of accepted materials, visit [austintexas.gov/austincomposts](http://austintexas.gov/austincomposts)

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





# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

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

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

First, be sure to put as much 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 tie small branches (no longer than 5 feet or thicker than 3 inches in diameter) into manageable bundles with string or twine and place them 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/austincomposts](http://austintexas.gov/austincomposts) or call 3-1-1.