

Food Scraps Compost Drop-off Program Frequently Asked Questions

Where and when can I drop-off food scraps in Rockville?

Two drop-off sites are available 24/7 and free of charge:

- Maintenance Facility, 14625 Rothgeb Drive. [View the map.](#)
- Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive. [View the map.](#)

Who can use the drop-off sites?

The food scraps drop-off sites are for City of Rockville residents. Food scraps are not accepted from businesses.

What materials are accepted?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits, vegetables • Coffee grounds, tea leaves, tea bags • Dry goods (bread, pasta, nuts, rice, grains) • Dairy products • Eggs, eggshells • Meat, fish, poultry, bones (cooked) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food soiled paper products (napkins, paper towels, coffee filters, pizza boxes) • BPI certified compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils, etc. • Houseplant trimming and flowers • Hair clippings |
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What materials are NOT accepted?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic or Styrofoam products of any kind • Non-compostable plastic bags, wrappers, or film. * • Yard/garden waste (leaves, branches, etc.) • Pet waste or cat litter • Diapers, sanitary products, baby wipes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oyster or clam shells • Candles, synthetic corks, and gum • Grease, fats, oils • Ash from wood or charcoal • Dental floss, q-tips, dryer lint sheets • Dead animals |
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- Remember, if you are in doubt, THROW IT OUT!**

***Traditional plastic bags are not accepted.** You may use a liner in your kitchen bin or empty contents loosely into the collection bins. *However, any bags placed in the collection bins must be labeled as either “home compostable” or “commercially/industrially compostable”* according to these [guidelines](#) from the composing facility. Bags that are labeled only as plant-based or biodegradable are not accepted. Paper yard trim, paper lunch or paper grocery bags are accepted.

What should I do with cardboard/paper?

- Greasy → Compost
- Clean → Recycle
- Wax lined → Recycle or trash
- Made from 100% organic materials → Compost

Why shouldn't I take yard waste to the drop-off sites?

While yard waste such as leaves, branches, and pruning debris are compostable, they will fill up the drop-off bins quickly. These items should be placed in biodegradable paper lawn bags or a 32-gallon trash cans and set at the curb on your weekly collection day. Yard waste is recycled into mulch that is available free of charge at [Montgomery County's Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station.](#)

How often are the food-waste carts emptied?

The city's food scrap carts will be emptied at least once per week by our contracted hauler. This may increase in frequency as food scrap collection and participation in the program increase.

What happens to my food scraps once they are collected?

Food scraps are transported by a private contractor to the Prince George's County Organics Composting Facility for processing. The food scraps are composted to create a soil amendment product known as Leafgro GOLD[®], a nutrient rich dark humus-like material, marketed by the County's contractor.

How should I store food scraps before they are dropped off?

You can store food scraps in almost any reusable container, ideally with a lid. The key is to make the bin easy to access while you cook, whether it's on your countertop, in a nearby cabinet, or even on your patio. You can also keep the scraps in the freezer or refrigerator to reduce odors.

How frequently should I drop-off my food scraps?

We recommend emptying your kitchen bin weekly, but you may choose to empty it as often as makes sense for your household and schedule.

How do I control odors?

You can prevent odors by regularly cleaning all containers after each drop off. Sprinkling baking soda in the container or storing scraps in the refrigerator or freezer may also help control odors.

What can I do to avoid fruit flies in my kitchen compost bin?

- Ensure that your kitchen compost bin has a lid and is emptied often.
- Use BPI certified compostable bags to help keep the bins clean. Clean empty bins with hot, soapy water after each drop off.
- Trap fruit flies by setting out a small bowl or cup with equal parts water and apple cider vinegar, cover with plastic wrap, and poke a few small holes in the wrap with a toothpick or fork.

What about donating food to people in need?

It is always better to have food consumed by people or animals. This program is intended to divert food that would otherwise go into the trash and turn it into a useful product. We encourage the support of local food banks, especially for dry goods. [Here are some resources for food donation.](#)

What about backyard composting?

The city's drop-off sites accept items, such as cooked meats, bones, and dairy products, which are typically not appropriate for backyard piles, so feel free to bring those and any extra food scraps to the drop-off sites. Residents who compost other food scraps, such as fruits and vegetables, at home are encouraged to do so with a rodent-proof compost bin with a tight-fitting lid.

Why not use the garbage disposal?

Recycling organic waste into compost is more cost-effective and environmentally friendly than using a garbage disposal. Food waste can overload and clog your pipes and city sewer pipes. Wastewater treatment plants require energy and resources to separate solids, including food waste.