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County Executive



KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

# DEPARTMENT OF THE **ENVIRONMENT**

## RESOURCE RECOVERY DIVISION

# Food Scraps Composting

Prince George's County offers a Curbside Organics Composting Program that includes food scraps collected along with yard trim



# WASTE DIVERSION & FOOD SCRAPS COMPOSTING

Food Scraps Composting is one of several components of the County's waste management arsenal employed to protect and preserve the environment within the County.

## Benefits

Diverting food scraps from landfilling reduces the County's carbon footprint, conserves space in the landfill, and assists in the production of an all-organic soil amendment, "Leafgro GOLD<sup>®</sup>" made solely in Prince George's County, which may be used to remediate soil erosion and grow healthier plants.



# HISTORY

During the 2012 legislative session considering increasing waste diversion goals (45% by 2015)

County Council passed one of the most environmentally aggressive bills within the last 20 years

**CB-87-2012** mandated the establishment of a food scrap composting pilot project by 2014



# 2013 FOOD SCRAP PILOT

May 2013 tested food scrap composting  
utilizing mobile Gore Cover Technology

2 expansions GORE system since 2013 from 3 heaps  
to 4 and from 4 heaps to 8 heaps

With incremental food scrap increases of 1,509,  
4,400 to 9,785 tons in FY 18

In 2018 a 12-bunker walled system was completed

Allowing for the acceptance and processing of over  
32,000 tons of food scraps per year





# PROGRESS

## Pilot

1 year EPA grant funded pilot implemented between December 2017 & January 2019  
Approximately 200 households; Peppermill/ Carmody Hills , Wilburn Communities  
after 6 months; communities in Laurel, and Tantallon in Ft. Washington were added  
*(northern, southern and central areas were represented)*

An average of **5.5 pounds** per household per week were collected

## Phase I - 2021 Expansion

Opt-in opportunity was offered to 10,000 households  
Suitland, District Heights/Forestville, Upper Marlboro, Beltsville and Laurel  
Approximately 1,500 opt-ins





# PROGRESS CONTINUED

## Phase II - 2022 Expansion *recently completed*

Offered all residential curbside collection participants (172,000) the opportunity

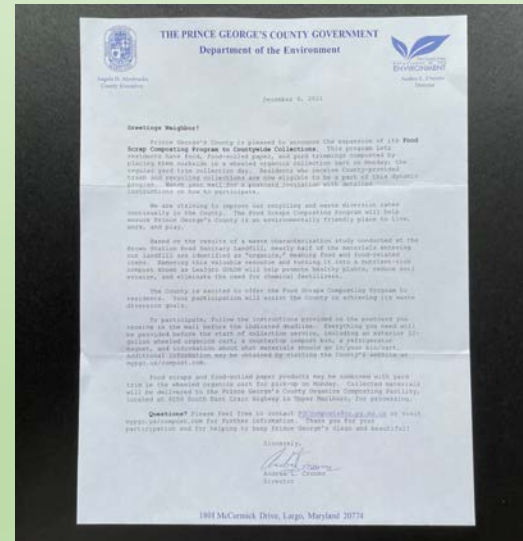
Mailed out engagement letter from DoE Director

Followed by a large full-color postcard; with detailed opt-in information;

The opt-in deadline was Feb 20, 2022



Engagement Materials





# PROGRESS CONTINUED

## Phase II - 2022 Expansion cont.

Approximately 22,000 households chose to participate  
@ 11% of the current curbside collection residents  
Requests to participate are still coming in

Distribution of program materials – began March 28, 2022;  
Residents received a 32-gallon wheeled cart, a 2- gallon mini bin, and a welcome package, including a collection start date flyer (May 16,) a refrigerator magnet, an FAQ's, a How To Guide, and a list of Acceptable Compostable liners



# Residential Welcome Packet



## GREETINGS!!!

### FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION PROGRAM

Collections begin Monday, May 16, 2022.

**\*\*Place your food scraps at the curb by 6:30 a.m. inside the ORGANICS CART combined with yard trim, in a paper yard trim bag or a compostable liner.**  
*(Paper towels, soiled napkins & newspaper are absorbent and help to reduce excessive moisture).*

For additional information visit [mypgc.us/compost.com](http://mypgc.us/compost.com), call 3-1-1 or email: [pgccomposts@co.pg.md.us](mailto:pgccomposts@co.pg.md.us)

Program information may be distributed periodically via email.

Thank you for your participation!

Service launch begins  
**May 16, 2022**

## How to Compost Guide



- 1 COLLECTING YOUR FOOD SCRAPS**  
Keep your interior food scrap collection containers in a convenient location in your kitchen, such as on your countertop, under the sink or in your freezer. While cooking or cleaning up, place your leftover food scraps in your containers.
- 2 STORE COMPOSTABLES IN THE KITCHEN CONTAINER UNTIL COLLECTION DAY IF POSSIBLE**  
The night before your collection day, place your compostables in your exterior organics cart, with yard trim and place it curbside by 6 a.m. Depending upon the amount of food scraps you have, your kitchen bin may need to be emptied more than once per week.
- 3 PLACE WET COMPOSTABLES ON TOP OF DRY ONES**  
Putting food scraps on top of used newspapers, crumpled brown paper bags and paper towels helps to soak up any liquids, reducing the chance that the liner will leak or break. Do not put hot liquids in your liners/bins.
- 4 STORE WET, SMELLY SCRAPS IN THE REFRIGERATOR OR FREEZER UNTIL COLLECTION DAY**  
Soaking meat scraps, bones, and fishy items in the freezer until collection day will reduce the chance of unpleasant odors in your kitchen. Place these items in your cart on collection day.



How to properly prepare & store materials for collection

## FAQ CURBSIDE ORGANICS COLLECTION



### Why is the County offering a Curbside Organics Composting Program, and why should I participate?

Collecting food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard trimmings at the curb will help keep valuable materials that are not waste out of our landfill, reduce excessive methane greenhouse gas emissions, protect our environment and help Prince Georges County get closer to our zero waste goals. Composting also creates a nutrient-rich soil amendment that improves soil health and function.

### What can I compost?

There are a variety of materials that can be composted, including yard trim, leaves, grass and brush, food, paper plates, napkins, paper towels and food-soiled pizza boxes. A few examples of food items include: fruits and vegetables, cooked meats, leftovers, bones, eggs and eggshells, dairy (no liquids), seafood and shellfish, baked goods, paper coffee filters and coffee grounds, tea bags and loose tea leaves. Visit [mypgc.us/compost](http://mypgc.us/compost) to view a list of unacceptable items.

### Can I compost leftover cooking grease and oil?

We do not accept fats, oils, and leftover grease in the composting program. These items can be recycled at the County's Household Hazardous Waste Acceptance Site located at the Brown Station Road Sanitary Landfill, 13611 White House Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774. The facility is open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday only from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

### How can I participate?

Digital residents will receive information in the mail that provides details on opting in. After opting in, participants will receive a starter kit that includes a 2-gallon kitchen countertop pail, an exterior 20-gallon wheeled cart, educational materials, and a refrigerator magnet listing the acceptable organics items for composting. Food scraps must be placed inside of the organics cart for collection. Food may be contained in paper yard trim bags, compostable liners or combined with yard trim in the organics cart.

### How do I compost my food scraps?

Participants should place their food scraps or leftovers into the kitchen pail. Empty the contents into the exterior wheeled cart and place at the curb by 6 a.m. Please ensure your organics cart is visible and accessible from the street. The County recommends participants purchase 5-gallon compostable liners for the kitchen pail available at local retail stores. A list of tested and approved liners was included in your welcome packet and is also available online at [mypgc.us/compost](http://mypgc.us/compost). However, there are many liners available in the market place. Compostable liners and paper bags are accepted.

### What happens to my organic materials (food scraps and yard trim) once they are collected?

All organic materials are transported to the Prince Georges County Organics Composting Facility for processing. Materials are placed in a bulk composting system where they decompose and are transformed into a rich soil amendment, marketed and sold in bulk as Leafgro GOLD®.

### How is the Curbside Organics Composting Program different from backyard composting?

The County's program accepts additional types of food waste that are not generally recommended in or suitable for backyard composting. However, residents that currently compost at home are still encouraged to do so.

### How do I control odors?

You can help prevent odors by rinsing out the kitchen pail and hosing out the wheeled cart after each collection. Sprinkling baking soda in the cart may also help control odors. Participants can also place their "wet" materials in a large container and keep this container in the refrigerator or freezer before placing in the exterior wheeled cart prior to collection on Monday morning.

### How do I report a missed organics, food scraps and yard trim collection?

To report a missed Prince Georges County-provided organics, food scraps and yard trim collection, contact PGC311 (out-of-county: 301-583-4748). PGC311 will create a Service Request for you. This information applies only to collections provided by Prince Georges County. If your collection contract is directly between you and a hauling company or arranged by your homeowners' association or municipality, contact the company, association, or municipality directly.

To learn more visit [mypgc.us/compost](http://mypgc.us/compost)



General information about the Food Scraps Composting Program

## WHAT CAN I COMPOST?



- Yard Trim: Rascones de jardín
- Seaweed and Shellfish: Mariscos y almejas
- Dread, Pasta and Grains: Pan, pasta y granos
- Fruits and Vegetables: Frutas y vegetales
- The Eggs and Loose Tea: Huevos de 50 y té sueltos
- Paper Pie Crusts Containers: Contenedores de brócoli en papel
- Food Soiled Paper: Papel con comida
- Meat and Bones: Carne y huesos
- Uncracked Paper Bags: Bolsas de papel no resquebrajadas
- Egg Shells: Cáscaras de huevo
- LaTevens: Lámparas
- Uncracked Paper Plates: Platos de papel no resquebrajados
- Paper Towels and Napkins: Toallas de papel y servilletas
- Dairy Products: Productos lácteos
- Coffee Grounds and Filters: Café molido y filtros

[mypgc.us/compost](http://mypgc.us/compost)





# Acceptable Items

- Fruits & Vegetables
- Seafood & Shellfish
- Tea Bags & Loose Tea
- Paper Ice Cream Container
- Paper Towels and Napkins
- Coffee Grounds & Filters
- Egg Shells
- Dairy Products
- Meat & Bones
- Leftovers
- Bread, Pasta, and Grains
- Food Soiled Paper
- Yard Trim
- Paper Towels & Napkins
- Uncoated Paper Bags
- Uncoated Paper Plates



# How to Prepare for Collection

Residents may want to line their organics cart with a compostable liner, a paper yard trim bag or another absorbent material, i.e., paper towels, paper napkins, pizza boxes, or leaves to help soak up the moisture created when food begins to break down.

Yard trim may also be placed in the organics cart.

Combining food scraps with yard trim in the cart will help to remediate some of the moisture created by the food.

***FOOD SCRAPS MUST BE PLACED IN THE COMPOST CART FOR COLLECTION.***

Yard trim may be placed in either the organics cart, in paper yard trim bags, or in a can with a tight-fitting lid that is clearly labeled and dedicated solely to yard trim collection.



# Collecting Compostables

- This is the COMPOST 32-gallon wheeled cart/toter
- We **DO NOT** accept plastic bags. Contaminated compost will not be collected. A sticker will be placed on the cart and the cart will be left at the curb.



# Collecting Compostables

- Yard trim and food scraps are collected on **MONDAYS only**.
- Place the organics wheeled cart/toter at the curb by 6 am.
- Report missed collections to PGC311 by calling 3-1-1 (inside County) or 301-883-4748 (outside County) from 7 am to 7 pm or online 24/7 through the app or website at <https://ocr.mypgc.us/pgc311>.
- Residents can report same-day food scrap concerns after 12pm on Monday.





# Collecting Compostables

- Yard trim and food scraps are collected year-round on **MONDAYS only EXCEPT on certain holidays**. All food-related items **MUST** be placed in the County-issued 32-gallon wheeled “organics” cart.

Holiday	Services Resume
Veteran’s Day – Friday, Nov. 11	Monday following the holiday
Thanksgiving Day - Thursday, Nov. 24	Monday following the holiday
Christmas Day - Sunday, Dec. 25	Monday following the holiday

- Yard trim includes grass clippings, leaves, small branches, brush, and Christmas trees which are collected December through January.



# Acceptable Compostable Bags



For more information on examples of acceptable bags and liners, visit [mypgc.us/compost](https://mypgc.us/compost).



# Acceptable Compostable Bags

Bags **must be compostable**: They will say either “**home compostable**” or “**commercially/industrially compostable**”- all are acceptable.

Bags that are biodegradable, but not compostable are not preferred.

Look for bags/liners with the following labels:



***In no case are traditional plastic bags of any kind accepted.***



# Non-Acceptable Items

- Plastic bags, wrappers or film
- Styrofoam containers
- Plastic jugs
- Plastic bottles
- Aluminum or steel cans, utensils, pans
- Aluminum foil, disposable aluminum pans
- Plastic utensils
- Grease or fats
- Liquids of any kind
- Facial or toilet tissue
- Diapers
- Pet waste, including cat litter
- Household trash/litter
- Kitchen pots or pans
- Foil backed or plastic backed paper
- Ceramic or plastic dishes
- Glass of any kind





Prince George's County is currently considering names and slogans for the curbside composting program, and we'd love to hear your opinion!

Take the quick 2-minute survey to vote for the program name and slogan of your choice. Polling **closed** this Friday, May 13, 2022.

**SURVEY LINK:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pgcofoodyardscrapsurvey>

# ORGANICS COMPOSTING

We're turning  
**FOOD SCRAPS**  
into **COMPOST**



**Prince George's County wants to hear from you!**

We are looking for a name and slogan for our curbside food and yard scrap collection program, and your opinion is important to us. Take this short survey to tell us your preferences!

Stay tuned—much more information about this new service is coming soon!  
Visit [mypgc.us/compost](https://mypgc.us/compost)



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County Executive



**LINK TO SURVEY:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/pgcofoodyardscrapsurvey>

# **Questions & Answers**



# CONTACT US

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[mypgc.us/compost](http://mypgc.us/compost)

