



Angela D. Alsobrooks
County Executive



DEPARTMENT OF THE **ENVIRONMENT**

RESOURCE RECOVERY DIVISION

Food Scraps Composting

Prince George's County offers a Residential Curbside Organics Composting Collection Program that includes food scraps collected 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[®]" made solely in Prince George's County, which may be used to remediate soil erosion and grow healthier plants.



HISTORY

- In the 2012 legislative session, the Maryland general assembly passed House Bill 929.
 - Counties with a population that exceed 150,000 citizens must divert waste to a sustainably sound recycling program.
- In 2012, Prince George's County Council passed one of the most environmentally aggressive bills within the last 20 years.
- Council Bill CB-87-2012 mandated the establishment of a food scrap composting pilot project by 2014.



INFRASTRUCTURE – The 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 respectively.
- December 2018 the full scale 12 Mega Heap Bunker System with Gore Covers installation was completed; allowing for processing of an additional 32,000 tons of food scraps per year.
- Food scraps are accepted from pre and post-consumer entities, including residential, commercial and institutional sectors.



INFRASTRUCTURE – The GORE® cover technology



Once mixed, the materials are placed in windrows under GORE® covers for processing.

The GORE® cover technology is equipped with an oxygen controlled, positively aerated system and oxygen and temperature monitoring devices, accelerates the composting process, producing finished compost in 8 - 10 weeks, opposed to the natural process of 8 - 9 months.

This system creates ideal composting conditions while efficiently trapping odors and other emissions. The results are a higher output in a smaller area with little energy consumption.



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.

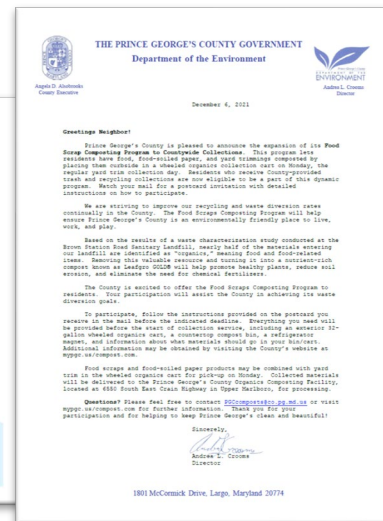


PROGRESS CONTINUED

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



Want to participate in food scrap collection?

If you would like to participate, please follow the instructions provided on the postcard mailed to your home.

Don't delay; opt-in as soon as you receive your postcard!



PROGRESS CONTINUED

Phase II – Summer 2022 Expansion cont.

- Approximately 22,000 households elected 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

Service launch begins
May 16, 2022



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, call 3-1-1 or email: pgccomposts@co.pg.md.us

Program information may be distributed periodically via email.

Thank you for your participation!

How to Compost Guide

- 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 container.
- 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.
- PLACE WET COMPOSTABLES ON TOP OF DRY ONES**
Putting food scraps on top of used newspaper, 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.
- STORE WET, SMELLY SCRAPS IN REFRIGERATOR OR FREEZER UNTIL COLLECTION DAY**
Storing meat scraps, bones, and fishy freezer until collection day will reduce unpleasant odors in your kitchen. Place your cart on collection day.

FAQ CURBSIDE ORGANICS COLLECTION

WHAT CAN I COMPOST?

- Yard Trim
- Seafood and Shellfish
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Uncoated Paper Bags
- Egg Shells
- Uncoated Paper Plates
- Paper Towels and Napkins
- Bread, Pasta and Grains
- Paper Ice Cream Containers
- Food Labels
- Dairy Products
- Meat and Bones
- Laundry
- Coffee Grounds and Filters

mypgc.us/compost



RECENT PROGRESS

Rebranding

The Prince George's County Curbside Food Scrap Composting Program entered a rebranding phase to support County Executive Angela Alsobrooks' push to broaden participant buy-in and engagement.



PGC Composts Phase III

Approximately 52,000 households received program materials;

- Full distribution within various County based communities began November 7, 2022.
- Recipients of rollout received updated:
 1. Welcome Packet
 2. 32-gallon cart
 3. Kitchen countertop bin



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



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



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.



HOW TO COMPOST

3 EASY STEPS



place scraps in your pail

1.

Put your kitchen pail in a convenient location, like on your countertop, so you can easily collect food scraps and leftovers.



Tip:

Pet waste (cat litter, dog waste bags) and human waste (diapers, baby wipes, used facial tissues) are NOT compostable. Please throw these items in your trash bin!

2.

When the pail is full, empty contents into the wheeled green cart. All food scraps must be contained in the green cart. Remember to bring your pail back inside.

Tip:

Storing meat scraps, bones, and fishy items in the freezer until collection day will prevent odors in your pail and green cart.

3.

Place your green cart curbside by 6 a.m. on Monday. To prevent odors, layer yard trim or uncoated paper products in the bottom of your green cart.

Tip:

To prevent odors, layer yard trim or paper products in the bottom of your green cart to keep it clean and dry. Empty your pail frequently, and hand wash or machine wash it after use. You can also use approved compostable bags.



take your green cart to the curb



TIPS TO CLEAN YOUR CART AND MINI BIN



Organics Cart

- Use lemon, vinegar and baking soda to sanitize and eliminate odors in your cart.
- Line the bottom of your cart with newspaper and sprinkle paper with baking soda.
- Use preventative measure, include an additional compostable liner in your bin to catch accidental leakage.



Mini Bin

- Wash your bin in the dish washer or with soap and water in the sink.
- Line your bin with newspaper to absorb possible leakage.
- Sprinkle interior of bin or newspaper lining with baking soda to reduce chance of odors.



ACCEPTABLE COMPOSTABLE BAGS



For more information on examples of acceptable bags and liners, visit mypgc.us/compost.



ACCEPTABLE BAGS
COMPOSTABLE



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ORGANICS COMPOSTING FACILITY



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 accepted.

Look for bags/liners with the following labels:



Plastic bags are not acceptable.



Monday at 6am

PLACE YOUR
WHEELED GREEN
CART CURB SIDE

EVERY
MEAL
EVERY
SCRAP
EVERY WASTE



CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

- Residents are initially timid with participating in diverting food scraps into a compost cart – primarily because plastic bags may not be utilized.
- County recognizes this and encourages residents to start off slow – by first adding vegetable and fruit peelings into the compost cart, and slowly adding other types of food scraps gradually.
- Continuance in explaining how to place/layer food, food soiled paper, yard trim to help with any potential absorption of liquid generated from the food and to help reduce any potential odors.
- Proper care of carts (cleaning).
- Educating the collection crews – Working with the contracted haulers to ensure compost carts are not missed during collections and ensuring proper tagging of materials that are placed in plastic bags by residents.
- Agency seminars are found to be one of the most effective forms of communication to learn all about the food scrap collection program - once residents learned they would be receiving a compost cart for food scrap collections. Seminars are very well attended.



WASTE COMPOSITION STUDY*



* Data results will be shared next year.

- The goal of the study is to evaluate the types of materials received on Mondays from the contract haulers that transport organic waste to the facility. Future waste composition studies can be utilized to determine the effectiveness of contamination reduction and food waste diversion efforts.
- During the composition study, materials are separated within the samples into three categories: yard trim, food waste, and contamination. Yard trim consists of leaves, grass, brush, and paper bags; food waste includes food-based products and compostable food products and bags; contamination includes any non-compostable material such as plastics, glass, metal, stone, etc.





FUTURE PLANS

As a result of positive buy-in and continued interest to participate in program services, the County plans to launch its fourth expansion phase this winter (2023).

Remaining residents, who are in the County's trash and recycling collection program, will receive equipment for food scraps/compost collection.



Questions & Answers



mypgc.us/compost

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