



Want a fresh kitchen? Compost all food scraps



When Recology first started San Francisco’s curbside food scrap collection program for composting in 1996, some people immediately responded, “Not in my kitchen.”

These composting’s-not-for-me customers feared potential odors and fruit flies.

But it turns out the opposite is true. Done correctly, composting your kitchen scraps can reduce odor in your kitchen. That’s because when you get a kitchen pail, you isolate items that might smell in one container.

No longer are food scraps mixed with other garbage under the kitchen sink.

San Francisco residents throughout the city find these three steps key to helping keep their kitchens clean and fresh:

1. **Get a kitchen pail.**
2. **Line your kitchen pail with a used paper napkin or paper towel.**
3. **Empty your kitchen pail into your green composting collection bin before you go to bed.**

Give your empty pail a quick rinse, and voilà, you’re done.

Recology offers kitchen compost pails to San Francisco residential and apartment customers, 1 per unit, at no

additional charge. To order a pail email: CustomerService@RecologySF.com.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The good work of composting our kitchen scraps is paying off. San Francisco composts nearly 400 tons of food scraps, sticks, and leaves per day through Recology’s green bin program. Together, via this program, we have kept more than 2 million tons of compostable material out of the landfill.

In addition to diverting materials from landfill disposal, composting reduces landfill gas emissions, including methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

And the finished compost goes onto local farms. That improves soil health, which helps farms grow more nutrient-dense food and save water. Compost is a natural sponge that attracts and retains water.

So, let’s all get a kitchen pail and compost. When we do, we play an integral part in programs that benefit the environment in multiple ways.

Composting is something we can each do every day to be part of the solution. And, as a bonus, we wake up to clean, fresh kitchens. ■

Healthy soil, rain nurtured a great harvest year

Farmers in Northern California experienced good harvests in 2023.

Many factors played into that, including applying compost and a good 2022-2023 rainy season after three years of drought.

Collin Lilly, winemaker at Maxville Winery in St. Helena, believes food scraps should be returned to farms as finished compost. He also thinks vineyards should use compost made from harvest pomace, grape skins and stems.

“It’s part of the whole recycling process,” said Lilly. “It needs to be returned to the earth where it can be absorbed again and continue the cycle.”



Applying compost helps farms feed microorganisms in the 14 inches of topsoil that grows our food.

Compost is also a natural sponge that attracts and retains water. Applying compost softens the soil, allowing plant roots to travel further through the soil and helping the soil store water.

“The 2023 vintage is a great vintage because we had enough water applied just naturally,” Lilly said.

Summer temperatures got hot, but not too hot. When harvest came, crews rushed to bring in the crops and the timing worked. The positive results are available for all to see and taste at local farmers’ markets.

Many thanks to all who participate in San Francisco’s curbside food scrap collection program for composting. Your efforts helped achieve healthy harvests in 2023 and will continue to do the same this year and beyond. ■

Simple ways to say 'No thank you' to plastic

To help reduce the proliferation of plastic packaging, look for loose fruits and vegetables when purchasing food at grocery stores and farmers' markets and decline plastic bags and other single-use plastics whenever possible.

If the product you seek requires packaging, choose items presented in glass, paper, or metal. All three materials are readily recyclable.

Studies estimate that 9 to 11 million tons of plastics enter our oceans yearly, negatively impacting fish, birds, dolphins, whales, and other animals. Scientists are increasingly finding microplastics in food, water, and air. Researchers project that plastics in our environment will double by 2030 and nearly triple by 2040.



Bananas and other fruits and vegetables come in their own packaging. No plastic required.

Recology, San Francisco's employee-owned recycling company, and the City are working to recycle as much



To reduce plastic bags, some stores make empty boxes available to customers for free.

material as possible, including plastic. We installed state-of-the-art optical and robotic sorters in our recycling plants to separate plastics from other recyclables, including paper. Unfortunately, plastic is made from several different resins and comes in numerous forms, many of which are not readily recyclable.

SOLUTIONS

Each time we avoid plastic when shopping, we send direct messages to brands and their packing companies. If we don't buy it, they won't make it.

Do convenient, low-cost, environmental options exist for every product we seek to purchase? No,

but in many cases, we can buy foods with no packaging or opt for products packaged in materials that can be readily recycled or composted.



Glass bottles and jars are 100 percent recyclable.

Buy only what you need and make full use of what you have. Embracing this practical philosophy saves money and reduces trash, including plastic. ■

Environmental benefits of recycling Christmas trees

Recycling your Christmas tree seems a simple act, and it is, but the environmental benefits are significant.

San Francisco recycles 500 tons of Christmas trees a year, an estimated 25,000 trees. That's a lot of landfill space saved and gas emissions avoided.

Residents placed their Christmas trees at the curb, next to their blue cart, during the first two weeks of January. Recology crews assigned to tree collection drove down every residential street in San Francisco from January 2 to 12 and picked up the trees.

We ground the trees in a large woodchipper and used the pieces to make a finished mulch.

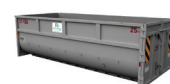
Pine trees contain pine pitch, a tacky resin, which acts as a natural weed suppressant. Mulch made from pine trees is used in commercial landscaping projects and around picnic benches to provide a natural groundcover that suppresses weeds.



Mulch made from Christmas trees can also be applied next to freeway onramps to reduce weeds, thereby increasing the visibility of drivers entering traffic.

Christmas trees help make the holidays festive. And recycling Christmas trees after the holidays helps achieve multiple environmental benefits. ■

Check us out on social media for quick tips, event info, and recycling news:



Debris Box Dept.
888.404.4008