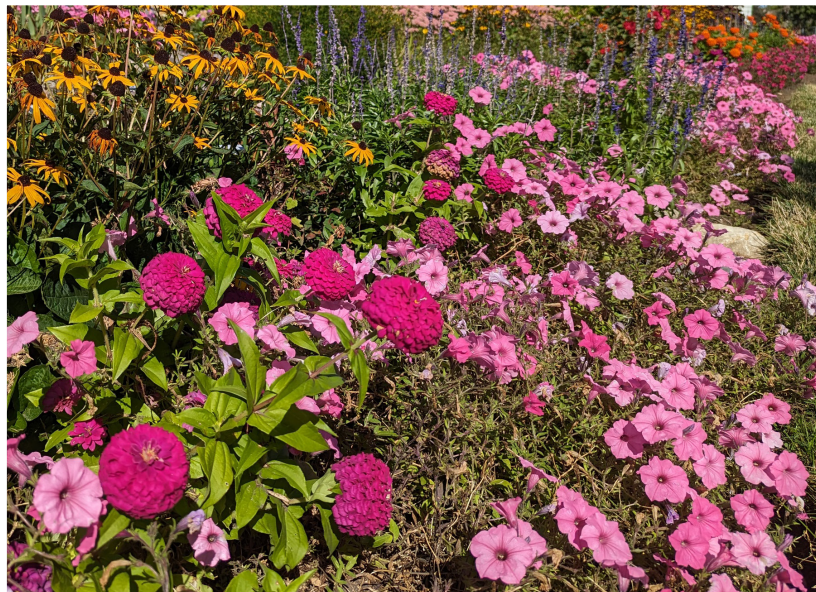


An Easy Guide to Using Your Organics Cart



Hutchinson's Food Scraps
and Yard Waste
Collection Program

Hello, Hutchinson Residents!

Our city is full of friendly people and beautiful parks, a wonderful trail system, and community services.

One of the unique services we offer is our food scraps and yard waste collection program. This means that residents can collect their food scraps and yard waste, and we will use them to make compost at our facility called CreekSide Soils. This program is special to our community and we take pride in it. We even sell compost to other regions to earn revenue, which helps fund city services. Plus, by collecting food scraps and yard waste, we can save money on trash collection fees because it reduces the amount of waste that ends up in landfills.

This guide is for Hutchinson residents living in single family homes receiving the City's organics collection service. It will help you learn how to participate in this program and contribute to keeping Hutchinson great!

“I’m very proud of Hutchinson’s commitment to creating the Creekside products from our organic waste. I brag about it to many friends and family and they wish their communities were as innovative as Hutchinson!”

–Hutchinson Resident

How do I participate in Hutchinson’s food scraps and yard waste collection program?

Food scraps and yard waste collection is part of the standard curbside service for all residential customers that are included in the City’s organized curbside collection services.

Participation in the food scraps and yard waste collection program is accomplished in 3 easy steps.

1

Place food scraps in a kitchen container. A list of acceptable materials is available in this document. A good rule of thumb is: **“If it grows, it goes.”**

2

Place food scraps in the green lid organics cart along with yard trimmings.

3

Place the green lid organics cart at the curb every week on your scheduled garbage day by 6:00 am.



If you have questions or are not sure how to dispose of an item, please contact **(320) 234-4227**
For more information visit: **hutchinsonmn.gov/composting**
This campaign is supported by grant funding from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

What happens to the organic waste that is collected?



Collection crews take the food scraps and yard waste from your organics cart and transport it to CreekSide Soils, our local, state-of-the-art, composting facility.

**Note: Use only compostable bags or brown paper bags in your bin.*



The material is mixed and then placed into aerated bunkers, where microorganisms break it down and heat up the pile to very high temperatures.



After about five months, the material breaks down and is transformed into an earthy, soil-like material called compost.



The compost is screened, bagged, and sold to various retailers.



Revenue from the compost sales is used for community services.

Why should I collect food scraps?

Collecting food scraps is easy!

About one quarter of what you put in your garbage is compostable food scraps. Instead, put your food scraps into your organics cart and help our City's compost processing facility produce a sellable product. Compost is valuable because it improves soil fertility, conserves water, and reduces erosion. Revenue from CreekSide sales goes back to our City for community services.

Here are some basic tips to keep your kitchen container and cart clean:

- Line your kitchen container with a compostable bag, paper bag, paper towels, or newspaper.
- Drain excess liquid from food scraps before placing in the kitchen container.
- Keep the lids closed and store organics in a shaded area.
- Periodically wash both your kitchen container and organics cart with mild soap and water.



Pro Tip:

Placing food scraps in the freezer can slow the decomposition of food, reduce odors, prevent flies and help compostables last longer. Consider freezing food scraps like meat, poultry and fish until it's time to place the food scraps in the organics cart for collection day.

How do I collect yard waste?

Yard trimmings go in the green-lid organics cart.

This includes leaves and garden waste. Branches and sticks the width of a pencil can also be included.

The lid must be fully closed. Yard trimmings that do not fit in the organics cart (e.g. large branches and brush) should be dropped off at:

CreekSide Soils
1500 Adams St SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350



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What can I compost?

If it grows, it goes!

Acceptable food scraps include any organic materials like fruits, vegetables, peels, rinds, meat, seafood, bones, grains, dairy, and seeds/nuts/pits. Soiled paper towels and napkins (unless contaminated by cleaning chemicals), and greasy pizza boxes may also be composted.

Unacceptable items are known as contaminants and, ultimately, impact the quality of the finished compost product. The best way to keep contamination out of the finished product is to keep it out of the green lid cart in the first place.

Not sure where it goes?

When in doubt, throw it out! If you are not confident an item belongs in your organics cart, it is better to put it in your trash cart. This helps our City control contamination in our organics collections.



Meat, fish, and poultry bones



Dairy products (cheese, yogurt, etc)



Vegetable & fruit trimmings



Egg shells, bread, and pasta



Table scraps and solid food leftovers



Paper towels and napkins



Coffee filters, grounds, and tea bags



Greasy pizza delivery boxes



Leaves and garden waste



Branches and sticks the width of a pencil



Plastic of any kind



Glass



Cooking oil, fat, and grease



Pet waste and kitty litter



Large branches and rocks



Collapsed large cardboard boxes and shiny cardboard



Construction material

Attention!



Residents are putting trash and recycling in their organics carts.

The City cannot sell compost that is contaminated with non-compostable items.

While the City employs both manual and mechanical methods to remove contaminants, this is expensive and imperfect. Let's reclaim the pride we once shared in this unique City service! Let's bring down our contamination rate to the very low level it used to be. Household composters, you're on the front line of the contamination battle. Avoid putting plastics, glass, shiny cardboard, and other non-compostables in your organics cart. By reducing contamination, we create more sellable compost and more revenue for the City.



Plastic contamination



Windrow pre-screening



Contaminants pulled from windrows

What is the main culprit of contamination?

Plastics!

When even a small number of households put plastic in their organics carts, it contaminates the entire collection. Plastic contamination makes it nearly impossible to turn the waste into usable compost that the city can sell. It also costs the City to have staff spend time pulling trash out of the collected organics.



What goes in my other carts?

Trash (Black lid): When in doubt about whether something belongs in the recycling or organics cart, put it in the trash cart. When in doubt, throw it out!



Recycling (Tan lid): Place recyclables such as plastics, metals, cardboard and paper loose (not in plastic bags) in your recycling cart.



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What bags should I put in the organics cart?

Only put certified compostable bags or brown paper bags in your organics cart.

Compostable bags are available for free at bag pick up events held 3-4 times a year.

Pay attention to your utility bill and City website to learn of upcoming pick-up event dates and locations. Certified compostable bags are also readily available for purchase at many local retailers and online. As an alternative, you can use brown paper bags to line your collection container.



Compostable vs biodegradable vs plastic bags

Biodegradable, degradable, and even plastic bags may look like compostable bags, but they are never appropriate for the organics cart. They are made from plastic. They break down over time into hundreds of tiny pieces of plastic. Only put certified compostable bags or brown paper bags in your organics cart.

We look forward to your participation in the City's food scraps and yard waste collection program.

Thank you for your commitment to *Compost It Right* for the City of Hutchinson.

Questions? Contact us:

- ▶ 320-234-4227
- ▶ compostitright@hutchinsonmn.gov
- ▶ 1500 Adams St SE
Hutchinson, MN 55350



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