

Home Composting: Yard Debris & Food

Why we care

Yard debris and food scraps make up 24 percent of landfilled waste in the Metro region. Space isn't the only issue. As these organic materials decompose in the landfill, they generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Your garbage disposal may seem like a good solution for food scraps, but the water treatment system is very energy intensive.

One option, if you live in Portland or Lake Oswego, is to put organics into your green bin. It will be transported to a compost facility, and you can buy finished compost, either in bulk or in bags. But it's more rewarding and cost effective to make your own. Compost adds nutrients to your soil and increases the soil's ability to retain the nutrients and moisture.

Simple, positive change

Use one of these methods to turn food scraps (but not meat, dairy, or grease) into compost:

- Compost yard debris and food together, including vegetable and fruit trimmings, egg shells, and coffee grounds. To prevent rodents, make sure your bin has a lid, a floor, and no holes or gaps larger than 1/4 inch.
- Start a worm bin. Metro has a brochure and [plans for building your own](#).
- Dig food scraps into the soil, covering with at least eight inches of dirt.

Before starting, or to improve your effectiveness, see resources on [Metro's website](#):

- Purchase compost bins at a discount, or obtain plans for building your own.
- Obtain Metro's brochure, or speak to a specialist, 503-234-3000.
- Visit a compost demonstration center at [Clackamas Community College](#) or Blue Lake.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.