

Organics Collection Program

Tips to Maintain Your Green Organics Cart

Maggots are fly larvae and occur when flies lay eggs on organic materials. This can occur in any cart where organic materials are placed (garbage or organics cart). Maggots typically have a seven-day life cycle with fluctuations depending on temperatures and other conditions such as moisture. To prevent maggots from occurring, eliminate odors and reduce their access to the cart.



Avoid maggots in your green organics cart with the following tips:

- Wrap your meat food scraps and bones in a sheet of newspaper before placing them in your green organics cart.
- Freeze your seafood or meat scraps until the day prior to your collection day.
- Put a layer of yard trimmings, food-soiled paper (napkins or paper towels), or baking soda on top of your food scraps.
- Rinse your organics cart with a mild detergent and water.
- Keep the cart lid closed.
- Spray the rim of the cart with bleach, ammonia, or bug spray weekly.

If you end up with maggots in your green organics cart, the following can help:

- Spray the top and inside of the cart with vinegar.
- Cover the maggots with lime, salt, or vinegar.

If you need to clean your green organics cart, do not use soap and other “cleaners” that could damage local ecosystems. Instead use natural methods and ingredients such as:

- Leave the cart lid open on a rainy day or rinse out the cart with a hose. Make sure to dump the used water and organics debris in landscaping (not into the storm drain).
- Try lime or lemon, baking soda, and vinegar inside the cart to clean and scrub away odors.

If you would like to minimize odors from your green cart, the following can help:

- Mix food scraps with materials that are dry and absorbent (and also organic) such as plant debris, shredded bills and sensitive documents, and paper napkins or towels. Sprinkling baking soda in the cart can help for smaller amounts of food scraps too.
- Store your cart in a cooler, shady area so the heat doesn't increase the decomposition (and smell) of the contents of the cart.

Tips to Line Your Food Scraps Pail and Other Options for Collection

As detailed above, lining your food scraps pail or collection container with a newspaper or a paper bag are two options. Here are other suggestions for how to collect food scraps:



- Reuse compostable paper containers for the collection of food scraps and food-soiled paper, such as milk/juice cartons, ice cream cartons, cereal boxes, boxes from deliveries, or paper bags from fast food or other restaurants. The container and its contents can be tossed directly into your green organics cart.
- Reuse what comes in the mail to collect food scraps and food-soiled paper, such as newspaper, grocery store advertisements, or credit card applications. These large pieces of paper make it easy to line your food scraps pail or collect and wrap up materials for the green organics cart.
- Reuse shredded paper from your home or office as an absorbent. Mix shredded paper in with your food scraps to help absorb fats, oils, grease, and water. This also helps prevent the loose, dry shredded paper from falling out of carts during collection and creating litter on streets.

Here's a tip to help you send even less to the landfill:

- Place a washable container next to your kitchen sink to collect food trimmings as you cook. It's also a good spot to scrape food scraps after meals.
- At the end of the day, toss the food scraps into your green organics cart for composting.
- Wash the container and place it next to your sink for tomorrow's food scraps.