

ORGANICS RECYCLING PROGRAM

THE QUESTIONS AND THE ANSWERS

Last updated October 14, 2022

BACKGROUND

Q1. Why is Golden Valley instituting curbside organics recycling?

A: Hennepin County Ordinance 13 requires municipalities of a certain size to offer all residents in one through four-plex households the opportunity to receive curbside organics collection. Following guidance from the Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy, Hennepin County Solid Waste Management Master Plan, Golden Valley's Resilience and Sustainability Plan, and the city's Environmental Commission, the Golden Valley City Council decided an all-in, everyone-pays program provides the best opportunity for the greatest number of residents to participate in organics recycling, divert the most material from the waste stream, and pay the lowest price for the service.

Q2. What are the implications for my existing trash service?

A: Residents may be able to reduce the size of their existing trash container, because about 30 percent of typical municipal solid waste (trash) is composed of food waste and other materials that can now be disposed of in your organics recycling bin.

ORGANICS RECYCLING CONTAINER

Q1. What can I put in my new organics recycling container? Can it be used for yard waste?

A: Your organics container cannot be used for sticks, leaves, or other yard waste. Residents will still need to find alternative methods to dispose of these materials, such as a yard waste service through their trash hauler. Food scraps, food-soiled paper, and certified compostable products can all be put in organics recycling. For a more comprehensive list, go to www.goldenvalleymn.gov/organics.

Q2. What if I have no room for an additional cart on my property?

A: Golden Valley revised its cart storage ordinance to increase flexibility for where residents can store their various receptacles, in part to accommodate the additional organics cart. You can read more about the storage requirements in the city code here: www.goldenvalleymn.gov/storing-waste-bins

Q3. How big is the organics cart? Can I get a different size if I want?

A: All eligible households will begin with a 35-gallon cart. Residents can request additional bins free of charge by contacting Republic Services at 763-972-3335.

Q4. Do I need to bag my organics materials?

A: Organics materials do not need to be placed in a bag prior to being put in the organics cart, however the use of bags can help to keep receptacles cleaner. If you choose to use bags, ensure that they are certified BPI compostable. These bags can be found at most grocery and convenience stores. Brown paper bags may also be used. Plastic bags should never be used for organics or traditional recycling.

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Q5. What if I returned my cart but want to participate now?

A: Call Republic Services at 763-972-3335 to request the drop off an organics cart at your residence.

Q6. Where does the stuff I put in my organics cart go?

A: Collected organic materials are sent to an industrial composting facility where it gets recycled into nutrient-rich compost. These compost piles get hot enough to break down materials such as bones, pizza boxes, and other compostable products that would not normally break down in backyard compost.

Q7. How can I prevent or get rid of bugs in my cart?

A: A physical barrier to prevent access to food scraps works best, such as putting organics in a compostable bag. Lining the organics cart with a brown paper bag can also help. Do not add liquids to collection bags as this will break down and weaken compostable bags. Cleaning your cart with vinegar and water can help get rid of odors that attract pests. Organics can also be stored in the freezer or refrigerator until collection day.

PROGRAM COST

Q1. What is the cost of the new program?

A: The program cost, which also encompasses costs for Mighty Tidy Day, Fall Leaf Drop-Off, Spring Brush Pick-Up, traditional recycling curbside service, as well as staff to run the programs, will be \$34 per household per quarter (up from \$17 per quarter).

Q2. Will everyone pay for this program regardless of their participation?

A: Yes, all residents in one- through four-plex households have an additional charge on their utility bill in part to cover the costs of the new organics program, regardless of if they participate or not. The all-in, everyone-pays method provides the best opportunity for the greatest number of residents to participate in organics recycling at the lowest price for the service.