

A Better Tomorrow Starts Now

Reducing food waste is an important step forward. Learn how to do your part!

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Why disposing
of organics is
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COUNTY OF ORANGE

Waste & Recycling

Our Community. Our Commitment.

Small Change Creates Big Difference

OC Waste & Recycling Director Tom Koutroulis sees several benefits in food waste reduction at Capistrano Greenery at Prima Deshecha landfill in San Juan Capistrano. PHOTO BY MARK RIGHTMIRE

Adjusting what we do with food scraps and other organic waste can make a positive impact

Talking trash is a priority for Tom Koutroulis, director of OC Waste & Recycling. With more than 20 years of industry experience and helming Orange County's landfills since 2017, he's dedicated to all things waste and recycling related – including Senate Bill 1383. The California law is ushering in a new era for resource recovery, with the goal of increasing the rescue of still-edible food by 20% and decreasing organic waste in landfills by 75%.

What's different under SB 1383? Biodegradable material once thought of as trash must go in curbside organics carts (formerly known as yard-waste carts). Food waste from apple cores to zucchini are now processed with grass clippings and leaves to create compost. Koutroulis is focusing on imparting new habits; starting a societal shift where everyone thinks twice before tossing a banana peel into the garbage.

"A big part of our shared challenge today is to educate the public and commercial sector that things are different now, and that small changes in waste and recycling behaviors make a big difference," Koutroulis said. "From my perspective, this is an exciting time in the waste and recycling industry. Orange County and its many jurisdictions must collaborate and be on the same page as we meet the demands of this industry-transforming legislation."

SB 1383 is a catalyst for incredible evolutions in resource recovery and waste reduction. Recovering food from grocery stores and restaurants and redistributing it into the community to help feed the



food insecure is a huge benefit of this law. OC Waste & Recycling is supporting the legislation further, with construction of greeneries (compost facilities) co-located at all three active landfills. The greeneries are currently accepting organic and green waste, with future plans to incorporate inedible food scraps in 2024. The benefits of food recovery and composting will leave a lasting effect on Californians, with Koutroulis and his team working with community partners to greet the challenges head on.

"A portion of the organic waste Orange County generates is still fit for human consumption," says Koutroulis. "Another major benefit includes reducing greenhouse gasses and preserving our landfills further into the future. Organics that can't be recovered for consumption will stay out of landfills and be repurposed into compost, generating full circle benefits for all residents of Orange County."

For more information on what's accepted in organics carts and what to do if you live in multi-family dwellings, turn to page 5.



Co-locating compost facilities at landfills, OCWR plays an important role in delivering recycled organics back into our communities. This is the next step in the evolution of waste management, enhancing infrastructure and conserving natural resources.

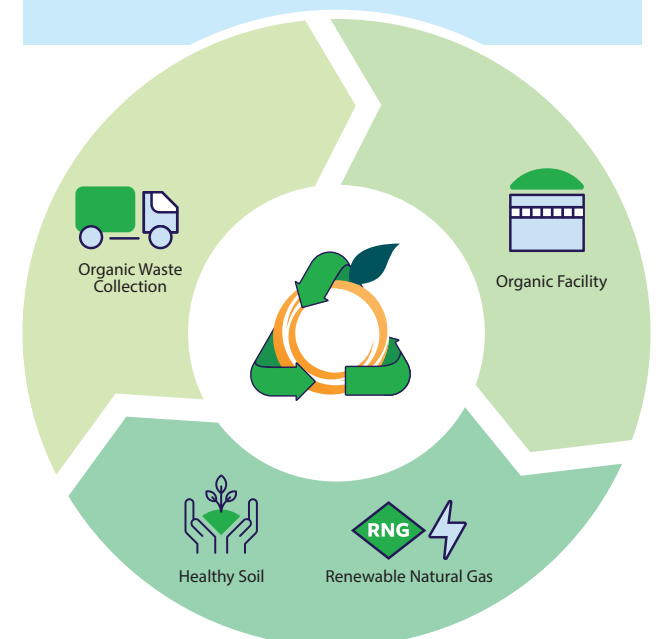
What to do about organic waste?

The Problem

- ✗ 40% of food produced in California goes uneaten
- ✗ OC Landfills continually receive edible and non-edible food waste, equivalent to filling the Honda Center every 5.2 days
- ✗ 56% of landfill content is food waste, food soiled paper, green waste or other organic waste

The Solution

- ✓ Businesses, community and residential composting programs
- ✓ Using mulch to retain soil moisture, save water and improving stormwater quality
- ✓ Generating biofuel or electricity, creating renewable energy



Go Green

Free Compost Available Through Orange County Community Compost Program

Looking for quality compost or mulch for your garden, yard, residential or other landscape projects? The OC Waste & Recycling (OCWR) Community Compost Program offers free compost and mulch by appointment at OCLandfills.com/Compost. There are three locations for self-serve pick-up of all quantities, including Brea, Irvine, and San Juan Capistrano. Select your preferred pick-up location through the online registration form.

OCWR has compost and mulch certified by the U.S. Composting Council Seal of Assurance (STA) Program to ensure compliance and consistency for recommended use as a topdressing for lawns and plants, as a soil amendment, as topsoil mix, erosion control or moisture control. The compost is generated from residential green waste recycled at County operated greeneries co-located at our County landfills. The Community Compost Program plays an integral role in keeping organic material out of our landfills, reducing environmental impacts, and providing a full-circle, resource back to our communities. Make an appointment today!



Discovery Cube OC introduces families to composting

Get Wiggly with Composting!

Discovery Cube and OC Waste & Recycling partnered to bring an environmentally themed, eco-friendly exhibition to the Cube.

The World of Organics Waste Lab helps families learn firsthand about composting and how it relates to the recent changes to organics recycling.

From interactive games to hands-on worm presentations highlighting vermicomposting, the outdoor lab unites education and entertainment to share the science behind the composting process.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OC WASTE & RECYCLING

The Discovery Cube OC is located at 2500 N. Main Street, Santa Ana. For hours and directions, visit www.discoverycube.org/orange-county/.

See Page 8 for more information and a free child admission coupon.

Tips to Recycling Organic Waste at Home



Contact your local hauler to learn about specific organics recycling programs.



Citrus zest and peels are non-toxic options for natural air fresheners that can go directly into the organics cart.



Keep your food scraps in the fridge or freezer, and empty this waste directly into the organics cart on your service day.



Line your organics pail with a piece of paper, newspaper or paper napkin to absorb any liquids and food waste.



Inside an organics pail, put a charcoal filter at the base or layer dry coffee grounds inside to help absorb odor.



Place a layer of green waste (yard clippings, leaves, etc.) in the organics cart before adding your food waste inside.



Learn about home composting: OCLandfills.com/organics

What Goes Where?

How to change your habits and recycle organic waste

Tossing bottles and cans in the curbside recycling cart is second nature, and Senate Bill 1383 is designed to create the same habits for food recycling. According to CalRecycle, 30 million tons of waste end up in landfills every year. A third of the material is organic waste and can be repurposed.

Keeping items like yard trimmings and food scraps separate from trash and other recyclables helps residents and businesses become a part of the recycling solution. Sorting green and food waste under SB 1383 is more than a new law, it's a vital habit that contributes to healthy soil for our community and preserves finite landfill space.

Cities throughout Orange County manage their own waste hauler contracts, resulting in diverse programming based on location. Each jurisdiction is rolling out their respective food recycling programs at different times, so what happens in your local community may not happen at the same pace in surrounding cities. And details vary, some haulers may allow for items such as compostable utensils or bags in their bins, and others may not.

If in doubt about what goes in waste, recycling and organics carts, contact your local hauler. If you live in an apartment/multi-family dwelling contact your local hauler or property manager.



For more information and a list of haulers: OCLandfills.com/organics



WHAT GOES IN MOST ORGANICS CARTS



Fruits



Vegetables



Meat and fish



Dairy products



Bread



Coffee grounds



Grass clippings and yard waste



Tree branches (3-4 feet or less)



Egg shells

Check with your local hauler to find out what can go in your organics cart.



WHAT DOES NOT GO IN THE ORGANICS CART

- Glass
- Metal
- Styrofoam
- Plastics
- Rocks
- Dirt
- Palm fronds (may vary depending on waste hauler)
- Painted or stained wood



HOW TO REDUCE ODORS AND PESTS

- Mix green waste like leaves or grass cuttings in with food waste
- Add baking soda to bottom of cart
- Keep food scraps in freezer until right before collection day
- Use newspaper at bottom of cart to soak up liquids
- Rinse out cart regularly
- Consider buying a charcoal filter
- Keep the lid closed

How About Household Hazardous Waste?

Improperly disposed of household hazardous waste (HHW) poses risks to both the environment and the workers who handle it. Items that require special care should not go in trash or recycling carts, and hazardous liquids should never go down the drain. Take advantage of free HHW disposal at your local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center.

FREE DISPOSAL

For Orange County residents, HHW disposal is free at four convenient locations throughout the county.

No appointment is needed; just drive through and drop off. Loads are limited to 125 pounds. Find a HHW collection center near you:

Anaheim

1071 N. Blue Gum St.
Anaheim, CA 92806

Huntington Beach

17121 Nichols Lane (Gate 6)
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

Irvine

6411 Oak Canyon
Irvine, CA 92618

San Juan Capistrano

32250 Avenida La Pata
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Hours: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tues - Sat
(Closed major holidays and rainy days)



For more information, call 714-834-4000 or visit online at OCLandfills.com/organics.

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS TO BRING TO HHW COLLECTION CENTERS:



Paint, thinners, strippers or removers



All batteries including lithium and automotive (free battery buckets available at collection centers)



Compact fluorescent tubes (CFL) and fluorescent light bulbs



Mercury thermostats or thermometers



Medical sharps in puncture-proof containers



Household cleaning supplies such as bleach, laundry soaps and drain cleaners



Pool chemicals



Pesticides



Automotive products such as motor oil, antifreeze and other fluids



Flammable items such as gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluids, helium and propane tanks



E-waste including cell phones, computer monitors, microwave ovens, printers, radios and TVs



Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors



WHAT NOT TO BRING:

- Asbestos
- Ammunition
- Biological waste, unused pharmaceuticals and controlled substances
- Radioactive materials
- Explosives
- Chemically treated wood items

Residents can peruse HHW collection center's materials exchange program and pick up new or partially used household, yard and car care products. For more information, call 714-834-4000.

Visit OCLandfills.com/organics.

Doing the Right Thing

John Wayne Airport creates a sustainable model for food waste recycling

Nearly 11.8 million passengers annually pass through Orange County's John Wayne Airport (JWA), consuming foods from garden fresh salads to burgers and fries. But what happens to all the airport food that doesn't get eaten?

"We determined that approximately 30% of our solid waste collected from the terminals was food waste and most of it appeared to be from the back-of-house preparation areas," says Melinda McCoy, JWA Environmental Resources Manager. "The Airport put together a program to divert food waste from the landfill. This program included setting up a separate waste bin for food and organics to be sent for composting, along with a robust training and outreach program. The program worked so well that initially we could not keep up with the amount of food waste being collected, we kept overflowing the bin."

"The concessions were amazing, they really supported the effort... Everybody came together and made it work."

MELINDA MCCOY, Environmental Resources Manager, JWA

Over the past five years, JWA has successfully diverted approximately 42 tons of food waste from landfills. This diversion includes six tons to edible food donation programs and 36 tons to composting.

By concentrating on its kitchens, the airport saw its food waste diversion efforts take off.

"We were collecting about one ton per month of minor food scraps and coffee grounds, and when we



Melinda McCoy, JWA's Environmental Resources Manager, says the airport was able to significantly cut down on food waste by focusing on where it came from – often the airport's kitchens.
PHOTO BY MARK RIGHTMIRE

rolled out our focused program along with a big push in education, we jumped to six-plus tons per month almost instantly," McCoy says. "It was amazing."

JWA's comprehensive food waste collection program starts with training food preparation and janitorial staff. Concession partners are provided with organic waste containers and compostable bags. Prominent signage reminds everyone what goes where.

McCoy says feedback from JWA's food and beverage concessions has been positive, particularly in that the process is easy to maintain once established.

"Once restaurants have the food waste bins in the kitchen and they've trained their staff – the staff that's chopping the vegetables and performing other kitchen work – it's very easy for staff to take all of the excess, the leftovers, and unused parts and sweep it into the food waste bin and it's on its way to composting," McCoy says. "The concessions were amazing, they really supported the effort ... Everybody came together and made it work."

For businesses looking to create and implement their own food waste collection program, visit OCLandfills.com/organics

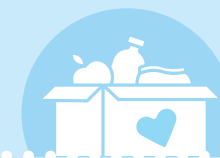


Feeding the Hungry

JWA and their restaurant concessions work with Food Donation Connection, a national support organization, to get still-edible food to people in need.

Businesses of all sizes as well as individuals can make edible food donations, too. Depending on the organization, donations can include:

- Canned or nonperishable items
- Prepackaged foods in original packaging
- Baked goods
- Dairy
- Fresh produce



For a list of edible food recovery organizations in Orange County and what they can accept, visit oclandfills.com/ediblefoodrecovery.

For further assistance, visit OCLandfills.com/ediblefoodrecovery for help with donations.



Making a Difference



David Tieu, an OC Waste & Recycling Deputy Director, shows off some of the compost produced at the Frank R. Bowerman Landfill's facility.

PHOTO BY MARK RIGHTMIRE



A Q&A with OCWR Deputy Director David Tieu

David Tieu knows firsthand how organic waste impacts landfills. As Deputy Director of OC Waste & Recycling, he applies his background in civil engineering and geology to ensure landfill and composting operations remain at the forefront of the industry. Organics—biodegradable materials from plants and animals—comprise 40% of waste buried in California landfills. Tieu is proud to be a part of an agency-wide team that builds infrastructure to support legislation requiring the redirection of organic waste. Tieu answers basic questions about what this means for County residents.

Why is recycling organics so important?

First and foremost, it helps get food to those in need. One in eight Californians are food insecure, meaning they don't know exactly where their next meal is coming from. Local food pantries and soup kitchens make sure food is not being wasted and goes where it's needed, feeding hungry families. Food that cannot be recovered will be diverted from landfills and taken to composting facilities.

How does diverting organic waste from landfills benefit the environment?

When trash is buried, methane gas is produced, which increases global warming. By removing organics from landfills, it prevents or defers the creation of gases that can lead to climate change. That's why California state law now requires communities to recycle as much organic waste as possible and recover edible food for those in need.

What can you tell us about your composting facilities?

We're excited about our composting operations, also known as greeneries, that are co-located at our three active landfills. We have three greeneries across the County. Bee Canyon Greenery in Irvine and Capistrano Greenery in San Juan Capistrano both utilize the traditional open windrow technology. Open windrows basically look like long rows of compost that can reach up to 8 feet high and 16 feet wide. Valencia Greenery in Brea is a windrow composting facility and will eventually convert to a CASP (Covered Aerated Static Pile) system, reducing water consumption and processing time. We've established valuable infrastructure to support organics waste management countywide for years to come.



The application of our compost and mulch on a hillside at our Frank R. Bowerman Landfill.

What happens to all that compost?

Communities will use it to fertilize their parks and public spaces. It's also available for residents and businesses through our Community Compost Program by appointment and through Compost Giveaway events. We're also looking at ways to distribute compost through new community partners for things like erosion control, landscape and agriculture applications.

Why is it important for people to do their part and ensure organic waste is recycled correctly?

If you put the wrong items in curbside organics carts, you're contaminating the material. Proper disposal requires everyone to work together and do their part. It's the only way the benefits of organics recycling will come to fruition. The process may feel a little overwhelming, since details on what's accepted in carts can vary from city to city, but the outcomes are worth it. It's important to care about what happens to the waste you create; it has a direct effect on future generations. Small changes now create big differences for the future.

For more information on how to recycle right, contact your local waste hauler. For list of haulers: OCLandfills.com/organics



Edible Food Recovery is Key to Feeding Hungry Families



- **OC FACTS:** Nearly half of all public school children rely on reduced or free school lunches for their major source of nutrition and 29% of seniors are food insecure

- **ORGANICS RECYCLING** connects food service businesses with food recovery organizations



- **NONPROFITS** will play a pivotal role in edible food rescue and feeding those in need



Looking for ways to donate food, volunteer or seek support? For information on food recovery and nonprofit organizations, scan the code.

We're Here to Help!



Got waste?
Find answers here:
OClandfills.com/organics



Residential organics recycling details



Business compliance



Local waste hauler information



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center locations



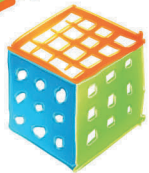
Classroom recycling guides for educators



OCRecycleGuide.com



Mattress Recycling



FREE

DiscoveryCube Child Admission

With adult General Admission ticket purchase

Present this coupon at any Discovery Cube Orange County ticket window for one free child general admission (ages 3-14) per adult general admission ticket purchased. Valid any day Discovery Cube is open to the public and regular tickets are on sale. Not valid for special events. Physical coupon must be presented and given to cashier, no photocopies accepted. Cannot be redeemed online or combined with any other offer or discount. Limit 6 discounts per coupon. Hours, prices, promotions and exhibit availability are subject to change without notice. Only valid through **February 28, 2026**. Discovery Cube is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. All rights reserved ©Discovery Cube.

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