

# CURBSIDE COMPOSTING PROGRAM FAQs:

## About the Program:

Q: *What happens to the food scraps we put out for collection?*

A: Public Works picks up your compostables on Wednesdays and takes them to Kitchen Harvest's on-farm composting site at Linvilla Orchards, just 3.5 miles from Media Borough, where they turn it into compost. Nature does most of the work, but they carefully monitor its progress and turn it as needed. The finished, screened bulk compost is spread at Linvilla and sold to local residents, businesses and schools. Kitchen Harvest has a video of their process at their website, [www.MyKitchenHarvest.com](http://www.MyKitchenHarvest.com), and more information at [www.facebook.com/KitchenHarvest](https://www.facebook.com/KitchenHarvest).

Q: *Does the pickup take the whole bucket and leave a new one? Or do they empty it into the truck on-site and we get back a dirty bucket? Should we line our bucket or what? Just thinking about the logistics, where to store, smells, etc.*

A: The pickup empties your bucket into the Borough compost truck each week. You can rinse your empty bucket out with a hose. You can also line it with a paper grocery bag if you wish. Most people keep a small (2-quart or so) container at their sink and empty it into the yellow program bucket, which they leave outside. Smells are not noticeable if you empty your indoor container on a daily basis. Your inside container should have a tight lid to prevent fruit flies in the summer.

Q: *Yesterday I was surprised that my bucket was already empty at 8 am. Does Public Works start really early in the morning or is someone stealing my compost? Just thought I'd ask since you said no question is too silly!*

A: Absolutely! No silly questions!!! Public Works starts collecting early in the morning. We ask that you have your bucket out on the street by 6:00 am. Many people put their buckets out the night before.

Q: *Can Public Works scrape out the food scraps that stick to the bottom of the compost bucket?*

A: No. They do not have time to. Use a paper bag or compostable plastic bag as a liner instead. Here is a link to compostable plastic bags that Kitchen Harvest allows:  
<https://smile.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B073C876BP/slmsptg-20>

Q: *We have purchased a screw top lid to make it more accessible.*

A: Screw top lids rule!

Q: *How can I get a screw top lid? Our lid was eaten by squirrels.*

A: Some participants have found success using a Screw Top Bucket Lid, available from Home Depot and other places.  
<https://www.homedepot.com/p/Bucket-Companion-5-gal-and-3-5-gal-Screw-Top-Bucket-Lid-in-Black-LD5GRLBK006/303808738>



**Bucket Companion** 5-gal. and 3.5-gal.  
Screw Top Bucket Lid in Black

★★★★★ (532) Model# LD5GRLBK006

\$7<sup>35</sup>

Q: *If I miss a pickup can Public Works pick up the excess food scraps the following week?*

A: As long as it is in a bucket

Q: *Can Public Works pick up yard waste that I leave next to the yellow bucket?*

A: Yes!!! Curbside Compost includes both yard waste and food scraps. We ask that you put your yard waste in a recycled paper yard waste bag (available at Deals and other hardware-type stores). Please do not overfill yard bags. Do not use plastic trash bags or plastic bag liners for yard waste. Sticks/branches are accepted provided they are no wider than four (4) inches in diameter and no longer than four (4) feet. Sticks/branches larger than 2" in diameter cannot be placed inside the bags and **must be bundled separately**.

Q: *How do I keep flies and bugs out of my compost bucket?*

A: Flies and bugs may increase in the summer for some people. **Tips:** Keep the lid on at all times. Keep the contents as cool and dry as possible. Store the bucket outside in a shady place. Occasionally add shredded paper or dry yard waste. Line the bucket with a paper grocery bag. Rinse out the bucket every week after Public Works empties it.

## What Can Be Composted?

Q: *Can you please explain more about what constitutes "food scraps"?*

A: Please look at the following link, which lists the food scraps acceptable in the program:  
<https://www.mediaborough.com/publicworks/what-can-i-compost>

Q: *Are acceptable food scraps with a little bit of dairy products on them (like cheese) okay or no skip it since there's some dairy on it?*

A: A small amount of dairy is fine. Thanks for asking first!

Q: *I was wondering if spent potting soil from indoor plants is allowed in the buckets?*

A: Yes, spent potting soil is fine.

Q: *Is it okay to put seeds and pits in the compost?*

A: Yes, pits and seeds (peach, avocado, olive, etc.) are fine. Not all composting is the same. Our compost naturally gets to very high temperatures for long periods of time making seeds in the pile not viable. Everything gets broken down. Backyard piles normally can't achieve this which is likely why you thought you couldn't put them in. Again, not all composting methods, maintenance and mixes are the same, so thanks for asking first!

Q: *We have a very mature black walnut tree that drops hundreds of seeds each fall. Could they be picked up for compost? I have 7 buckets outside with my compost bin. Not sure if they can be, but they are a food.*

A: Yes, throw those seeds in the bucket! They are fine.

Q: *A lot of tea bags actually have plastic in them. Some coffee filters have bleach or maybe other things that make them not ok for compost. Are ALL tea bags and coffee filters acceptable in the compost program? Or only ones labeled specifically as compostable?*

A: Let's go with all paper or compostable tea bags and coffee filters are acceptable for our composting method regardless of color or bleach. If you don't think it will rot or you see plastic-like material, then no thank you. (Consider switching to unbleached and non-plastic beverage materials).

Q: *Say, if we can compost coffee filters, can we also compost plain, white paper napkins without any dyes or patterns? Thank you.*

A: Yes, you can compost plain white paper napkins and paper towels in small quantities if they are soiled with food and cannot go into recycling. But if they are not soiled, best to do it through the regular recycling program.

Q: *How about pizza boxes?*

A: Our compost farm LOVES pizza boxes. The more the merrier. Don't try to cram them into your yellow bucket, though. You can either stack them next to your bucket or put them in your yard waste bag.

Q: *Can I compost nut cheese? It's non-dairy & plant based cheese.*

A: Nut cheese, if it is entirely plant-based, is fine.

Q: *Is tofu okay to compost?*

A: Yes. Tofu is permissible.

Q: *I know eggshells are ok, but what about eggs? If a raw egg spills on the floor can I pop the mess in the compost bucket? Can I put in scrambled eggs?*

A: Yes, in small amounts.

Q: *Can I recycle wine corks?*

A: Yes, but real cork only.

Q: *Do you accept compostable takeout containers? Should I break them up before putting them in?*

A: Compostable takeout containers are fine for collection. Break them up if you need to for space in the bucket, but otherwise it is not necessary.

Q: *Does bread have to be plain or can it have mayo or pb&j on it?*

A: Bread can have pb&j on it. Mayo and other oils are also OK.

Q: *Can I compost leftover candy?*

A: Sure, but NO wrappers.

Q: *Chocolate too?*

A: Yes (but no wrappers)!

Q: *How about pumpkins decorated with washable fingerpaint?*

A: Yes, they are fine.

Q: *Moldy & rotted pumpkins?*

A: Already on their way to being composted. Absolutely!

Q: *How about Canna stalks and other dead plants and flowers?*

A: Yes!

Q: *Can I put heads of romaine lettuce in the compost bucket—I am disposing it after the CDC recommendation not to eat it (per late-2018 E. coli warning).*

A: Yes, it is fine for our composting. The high-temperature compost process used at Kitchen Harvest would kill any possible E. coli present.

Q: *What happens to the fruit label stickers, many of which seem to be plastic? I do try to pull all of them off.*

A: Thank you! We appreciate folks trying to peel off the plastic ones. Shiny paper ones compost okay. But, yes, we do occasionally end up with a few stickers here and there in our finished compost because they are small enough to get through our screen too.

Q: *Can we include dog or cat fur sheddings in their compost? Human hair from home haircuts?*

A: Yes, hair is okay.

Q: *Can I compost floral arrangements?*

A: Yes, but not the floral foam.

Q: *Can I put a poinsettia plant in the compost? I understand it is poisonous to some animals so I wanted to check to see if it can go in the bucket.*

A: Yes, you can. Thanks for asking first!

Q: *I was wondering if we are able to compost #60 cotton and or 2% non-gmo cotton.*

A: One hundred percent cotton and cardboard Q-tips and cotton balls can be tossed into your compost bin and will get broken down by microorganisms and bacteria just like everything else.

Q: *We have several eco-friendly ice packs that say the "gel is 100% biodegradable, non-toxic and made from food grade ingredients". Before putting this in my bucket, I wanted to check.*

A: Yes. If it says 100% biodegradable or compostable, it is okay with Kitchen Harvest.

Q: *Are cellulose sponges compostable in our program?*

A: Trader Joe's says their Pop-Up Sponges are compostable. For other sponges, if they are really cellulose—i.e., made from wood pulp, they are fine. But if you are not sure, don't throw them in.

Q: *How about compostable coffee pods (Nespresso, Keurig, etc.)?*

A: If the box says they are fully compostable, then yes, they are fine.