

Home Composting: Yard Debris & Food

Why we care

Yard debris and food scraps make up 20 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 treatment system is very energy intensive.

Healthy soil requires a continuous application of organic material, and the best use for yard and food waste is making compost. You can buy compost from one of our local processors, but it's more rewarding and cost effective to make your own.

Simple, positive change

Use one of these methods to turn food scraps into rich soil:

- 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 (no meat, dairy, or grease) into the soil, covering with at least eight inches of dirt.

Before starting, or to improve your effectiveness, take advantage of Metro's resources (503-234-3000):

- Attend a composting workshop.
- Visit compost demonstration centers showcasing different types of bin systems.
- Purchase compost bins at a discount, or obtain plans for building your own.
- Ask for Metro's brochure, or speak to a compost specialist.

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