



Zero Waste SA

KNOWFOOD

Fact Sheet

Composting food waste through your council

Food waste is a problem

People often think putting food waste in the 'general' bin is OK because it's biodegradable. However, it's definitely not OK. The food waste ends up in landfill where it creates methane, a greenhouse gas which has 21 times the warming potential of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Throwing food scraps away also wastes the energy, water, money and resources used to produce, process, store and transport the food. It's much better to recycle – or compost – the scraps and reuse some of those resources.

The problem is big

The Australia Institute demonstrates that Australians dump \$5.2 billion worth of food every year. That's more than it costs to run the Australian Army, more than we spend on digital equipment like flat screen TVs and enough to meet the shortfall in the United Nations' Emergency Relief Fund .

What's the solution?

There are two ways you can help:

- composting through your council
- home composting

Compost with your council

In 2009-2010 Zero Waste SA and 10 local councils made it possible for 17,000 South Australian households to recycle food waste. During the 12-month-pilot, 589 tonnes of food waste were collected for processing, preventing an equivalent of 60 metric tonnes of CO₂ emissions .

“ If 70 per cent of metropolitan Adelaide councils took up food waste recycling schemes and approximately 70 per cent of the households in those council areas participated, there is potential to remove an estimated 30,000 tonnes of food waste from landfill. This is equivalent to 3000 truckloads of waste (each year). ”

Paul Caica

Environment and Conservation Minister
Ministerial Media Release, 6 July 2010



Government of South Australia

Zero Waste SA

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How you can participate

If you live in a participating council area, your council may give you a kitchen bench-top container to collect kitchen scraps, which can then be emptied into your green/garden organics bin. Other councils simply ask residents to place their food scraps in the green bin or wrap them in newspaper first.

It's important to know the rules of use for each system to ensure that the material you contribute can be recycled and does not contaminate other material collected.

Residents of the following council areas can put food scraps into their green organics bin loose, wrapped in newspaper, or in a compostable bag:

- Adelaide
- Campbelltown
- Charles Sturt
- Gawler
- Light Regional
- Mallala
- Mitcham
- Playford
- Port Adelaide Enfield
- Prospect
- Salisbury
- Wattle Range
- West Torrens
- Whyalla

If you do not live in a participating council area, please have a look at the KNOW home composting fact sheet available from Zero Waste SA.

* You must not use plastic shopping bags to line your bio basket, even if they are labelled 'biodegradable'. They will not break down with the composting method used in this system. If you run out of corn starch bags, contact your council or visit www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au for details on where to buy or obtain more bags.

** You must not use plastic shopping bags to line your kitchen caddy, even if they are labelled 'biodegradable'. They will not break down with the composting method used in this system.

Rules for use

Bio baskets

Bio baskets have holes and/or slots for ventilation.

1. Line the bio basket with one of the compostable bag liners* provided.
2. Place all your food scraps into the lined bio basket.
3. Remove the bag and contents as often as you like, tying a knot in the top of the bag.
4. Place the bag into your green organics bin and place the bin out for its normal collection, even if it is not full.

Kitchen caddy

A kitchen caddy is more or less a small bucket with a lid.

1. You don't need to line your kitchen caddy.
2. If you use a kitchen caddy, you can line it with paper towels or newspaper.**
3. Place all your food scraps into the kitchen caddy.
4. Empty the contents into your green organics bin, and place the bin out for its normal collection, even if it is not full.
5. You must not use plastic shopping bags to line your kitchen caddy, even if they are labelled 'biodegradable'. They will not break down with the composting method used in this system.

Scraps you can use

Food scraps that you can place in your bio basket or kitchen caddy include:

- Food scraps and peels
- Cake and bread crusts
- Fruit and vegetables
- Teabags, tea leaves and coffee grounds
- Meat scraps, bones and seafood
- Egg/oyster shells
- Cheese and yoghurt

FOOD WASTE TIPS

- Let hot food cool down before placing it in your bio basket or kitchen caddy
- Empty your food scraps into the green bin every 2-3 days – some people do it every morning when they go outside
- If you are concerned about small 'fruit flies', place a glass of vinegar near your food scraps container
- You can freeze meat and seafood until your bin collection day if you are concerned about odours

- Takeaway foods (pizza and chips etc)
- Shredded paper
- Tissues and paper towels
- Hair

Scraps you can't use

Items you must not put in your bio basket or kitchen caddy include:

- Plastic bags, oven bags or cling wrap
- Dishcloths and sponges
- Liquids
- Nappies
- Cigarette butts or ash
- Vacuum dust
- Sharps*

About Zero Waste SA

The goal of Zero Waste SA is to eliminate waste or its disposal by encouraging South Australians to:

- Reduce their consumption of wasteful resources
- reuse and recycle materials.

www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au

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