

## Store Composting Fact Sheet

# Store Fact Sheet

### Purpose of Composting

As you know, recycling is at the forefront of public awareness. Recycling, in all forms, promotes healthy living now and sustainability for future generations. Recycling of organic (compostable) material saves valuable natural resources and landfill space. Compostable materials such as fruits, vegetables, breads, floral trimmings, wax cardboard, and paper are used to make a soil-like product – Compost – used to richen soils for better growth and longevity.

### Compostables

- Vegetable and fruit materials
  - Outdated or spoiled food products
  - Paper towels, paper
  - Flowers, plant, soil
  - Coffee grounds and filters
  - Raw seafood
  - Breads and bakery products
  - Deli meats, sandwiches
  - Cheese and dairy products
  - Food preparation scraps
  - Inedible grocery and frozen foods
  - Wood boxes and wood pieces
  - Wet and waxed cardboard
  - Raw meat and poultry
  - Meat trimmings and rendering
  - Fats, oils, and grease
- \* Always **de-package** compostable materials before recycling.

### Recycling (this is separate from the compostables)

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash

- Food packaging/wrap
- Plastic gloves
- Styrofoam
- Twist ties
- Rubber bands
- Plastic tableware
- Band-aids, tape
- Rope, twine
- Wire
- Mixed trash
- Personal care items

## **Questions and Answers Handout**

### **What are compostables?**

Compostables (in the grocery store environment) include produce, inedible food, wet and waxed cardboard, paper, plants, and flowers. Compostable materials are biodegradable, meaning they can be naturally broken down and made into soil.

### **What is organics recycling or composting?**

Organics recycling, often called composting, is a process of consciously placing organics in separate collection containers to minimize contamination and preserve the quality so the material can be taken to a composting facility for processing.

### **What is a composting facility?**

A composting facility is a processing facility that accepts raw organic waste, blends it with other materials and produces compost – a soil amendment that is sold as an alternative to fertilizers.

### **What is contamination?**

Contaminants are foreign materials that make a recyclable or compostable material impure, for example, pieces of plastics mixed with food scraps.

### **Why are we separating compostables?**

Recycling saves money and reduces waste, which helps save our environment, natural resources, and landfill space. Of all the waste supermarkets generate, upwards of 75% is organic. Organics contain rich nutrients used in the making of soil-like material called compost. Recycling these valuable materials back into the earth as soil is better for our environment and can offer a lower cost alternative to landfill disposal.

### **What happens to the organics once they leave my store?**

All recycled organics are transported to the composting facility where the material is emptied onto a “pad” and mixed into an existing organics mixture. Over the course of weeks, once processed, it looks, feels, and smells like rich soil. It is then packaged and sold as “Compost”.

### **What do I do if something organic spills?**

The organic material may be put into the “Compost Material Only” container providing it has not become contaminated with any chemicals, or non-organic material, i.e.: glass, metal, plastic. If this happens, consider the material as trash.

### **Is the role of the store associate really as simple as sorting compostables from trash?**

Yes! As simple as it sounds, the most important role of every store associate is to consistently assure that ALL designated organics in the program are recycled every day. Keeping the compost material separate from trash will assure the highest quality compost product possible, as well as help the environment and help your store.

**What are renderings and can they be included?**

Renderings refer to grease, meats and meat by-products. Renderings are often collected separately and converted into animal food, cosmetics, soap, and other products. They can also be included in some composting programs if the facility is licensed to process meats and meat products. Meats may require some special handling.

**How can I help our company with composting?**

Remember before you throw anything away, stop and think...is it compostable, recyclable, or trash?

## Training Exercise Example

Place two sets of the following containers on one side of a room:

- Trash can
- Recycling bin
- Compostable bin

Place an assortment of clean waste materials on a table on the opposite side of the room (see following list of examples). All materials should be free of sharp edges. Use only recyclables that are separated in your current recycling program. Provide enough items for each participant to complete the activity 2-3 times.

**Trash** – food packaging, wrap, plastic gloves, Styrofoam, twist ties, rubber bands, tape, rope, and plastic tableware

*Note: Include items from the recyclables list if your recycling program does not separate these materials.*

**Recyclables** – bottles, cans, metal and plastic containers

**Compostables** – fruits, vegetables, unused paper towels, waxed cardboard, flowers and plants

### Complete the Exercise

- Show samples of the items and discuss the materials they are made from.
- Explain the concepts of recycling and composting, and how trash can be diverted.
- Have the associates sort the items into the appropriate containers.
- The trainer can review the correct and incorrect items that were placed in the bins.

## Composting Guidelines for Departments

The following pages provide examples of composting guidelines for each department. You will want to tailor these guidelines to your program since materials and collection procedures may vary from the examples provided.

# **Produce Department**

## **Compostables Guidelines**

### **Organics Collection**

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Fruit and Vegetable Cull and Trim
- Outdated and Spoiled Food Products
- All Cut Fruit and Vegetables
- Salads, Salad Bar items, Salad materials
- Paper Towels, Paper and Waxed Paper
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### **Recyclables Collection**

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### **Trash Collection**

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil,  
Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine,  
Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# Floral Department

## Compostables Guidelines

### Organics Collection

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Plants
- Cut Flowers and Floral Trimmings
- Potting Soil
- Plant Trim (Stalks and Leaves)
- Paper and Paper Towels
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### Recyclables Collection

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash Collection

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Plastic               | ▪ Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, |
| ▪ Styrofoam             | Rubber Bands, Band-Aids     |
| ▪ Metal, Aluminum Foil, | ▪ Gloves                    |
| Aluminum Twist Ties     | ▪ Plastic Cases             |
| ▪ Glass                 | ▪ Price Tags and Strips     |

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# **Bakery Department**

## **Compostables Guidelines**

### **Organics Collection**

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Breads
- Rolls and Pastries
- Muffins, Donuts and Bagels
- Batter, Dough, Residual Mixes
- Paper Towels, Paper, Waxed Paper
- Coffee Grounds and Filters
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### **Recyclables Collection**

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### **Trash Collection**

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil,  
Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine,  
Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# Deli/Hot Foods Department

## Compostables Guidelines

### Organics Collection

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Deli Meats and Cheese
- Salads and Salad Materials
- Sandwiches
- Salad Bar Discards
- Cull and Trim from Food Preparation
- Hot and Cold Outdated Foods
- Unused and Residual Food Ingredients (flour, sugar, spices, salt, batters, marinades, etc.)
- Spoiled and Discarded Foods
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### Recyclables Collection

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash Collection

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil, Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**



# Seafood Department

## Compostables Guidelines

### Organics Collection

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Seafood Discards
- Cull and Trim from Seafood, Steaking and Filleting
- Outdated Seafood
- Spoiled and Discarded Seafood
- Paper Towels, Paper, Waxed Paper
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### Recyclables Collection

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash Collection

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil, Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# Meat Department

## Compostables Guidelines

### Organics Collection

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Meat Trimmings
- Ground Beef
- Meat Department Discards
- Cull and Trim from Meat Cuttings
- Outdated Meats and Poultry
- Paper Towels, Paper, Waxed Paper
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### Recyclables Collection

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash Collection

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Plastic               | ▪ Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, |
| ▪ Styrofoam             | Rubber Bands, Band-Aids     |
| ▪ Metal, Aluminum Foil, | ▪ Gloves                    |
| Aluminum Twist Ties     | ▪ Plastic Cases             |
| ▪ Glass                 | ▪ Price Tags and Strips     |

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# **Grocery/Dairy/Frozen Foods Department**

## **Compostables Guidelines**

### **Organics Collection**

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Inedible Foods (de-packaged)
- Milk, Milk Products, and Juices (in paperboard containers)
- Bakery Products
- Frozen Foods
- Dairy Products (yogurt, cottage cheese, etc.) (de-packaged – if time allows)
- Eggs (in paper egg cartons)
- Ice Cream (in paperboard containers)
- Spoiled and Discarded Foods
- Paper Towels, Paper, and Waxed Paper
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### **Recyclables Collection**

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### **Trash Collection**

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil, Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

# Sushi Department

## Compostables Guidelines

### Organics Collection

Always De-Package Organics before recycling  
(remove all plastic, metal, glass and Styrofoam)

The following materials are compostable ORGANICS:

- Sushi and Prep Materials
- Sushi Bar Discards
- Cull and Trim from Food Preparation
- Unused and Residual Food Ingredients
- Outdated Sushi Product
- Spoiled and Discarded Foods
- Paper Towels, Paper, and Waxed Paper
- Waxed and Wet Cardboard
- Wood Boxes, Crates, Pieces – No treated wood

**Place all ORGANIC materials in designated recycling containers marked ORGANICS.**

### Recyclables Collection

The following items should be recycled, according to store procedures:

- Bottles, cans, metal, glass, and plastic containers
- Cardboard and paper
- Aluminum
- Plastic pallet wrap, shrink wrap, and front-end bags

### Trash Collection

The following items are TRASH, if they cannot be recycled:

- Plastic
- Styrofoam
- Metal, Aluminum Foil, Aluminum Twist Ties
- Glass
- Fabric Tape, Rope, Twine, Rubber Bands, Band-Aids
- Gloves
- Plastic Cases
- Price Tags and Strips

**Place all TRASH materials in regular TRASH barrels to be unloaded into TRASH container.**

**Thank you for helping the environment!**

## **Monitoring the Composting Program**

The overall success of the composting program depends on the training and implementation of the program at each store. To ensure that composting material is not contaminated, and materials are being separated according to the guidelines, ongoing training and monitoring must be part of the composting plan.

## **Resources**

Ohio Grocers Association (OGA)

<http://www.ohiogrocers.org/>

Ohio Grocers Foundation (OGF)

<http://www.ohiogrocersfoundation.org/>

### **Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)**

Division of Recycling and Litter

<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/9394/Default.aspx>

### **Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA)**

Ohio's Food Scrap Management Initiative:

[http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/food\\_scrap/index.html](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/food_scrap/index.html)

Composting Facility Regulations:

[http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/food\\_scrap/regulations.html](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ocapp/food_scrap/regulations.html)

Composting Program:

<http://www.epa.state.oh.us/dsiwm/pages/compstpro.html>

### **United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA)**

Food Waste Recovery Hierarchy:

<http://www.epa.gov/organicmaterials/fd-hier.htm>

Composting Information:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/composting/index.htm>

Food Waste Recovery Hierarchy Brochure:

<http://www.epa.gov/organicmaterials/pubs/food-guide.pdf>

Food Scraps Information:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/organics/foodwste.htm>

Food Scraps Resource List:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/organics/fd-res.htm>

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle Information:

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/muncpl/reduce.htm>

## **Food Marketing Institute**

Food Marketing Institute (FMI) Sustainability Information:

<http://www.fmi.org/sustainability/>

## **Ohio Compost Association**

[www.ohiocompost.org](http://www.ohiocompost.org)

## **Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)**

<http://www.swana.org/www/default.aspx>

## **Solid Waste Association of North America Ohio Buckeye Chapter**

<http://www.swanaohio.org/>

## **BioCycle, Journal of Composting and Recycling**

<http://www.jgress.com/>

## **Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)**

<http://www.bpiworld.org/>