

Organics Recycling: Accepted vs. Non-Accepted Materials

(Source: Hennepin County)

Food

A note about food: If you are unsure where to start with organics recycling, focus on collecting food. Spoiled food and food scraps are the most common material in the trash and the most nutrient-rich material in the composting process, making them the most important material to collect for organics recycling.

Accepted

All food, including:

- Bread and cereal
- Cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products and non-dairy alternatives
- Dough, pastries, and pies
- Eggs and eggshells
- Fruits and vegetables including peels, pits, shells, and rinds (remove produce stickers)
- Leftovers
- Meat, fish, bones, and shellfish, including scales and shells
- Nuts and shells
- Pasta, grains, beans, and rice
- Pet food

Not accepted:

- Black Walnut shells (these shells contain a toxin called juglone that is deadly to many plants)
- Chewing gum
- Grease, oil, or other liquids (small amounts are okay)

Paper products and packaging

Accepted:

- BPI certified compostable products including cups, plates, bowls, containers, parchment, and wax paper (must have the BPI logo or say BPI certified on the product or its container)
- Food-soiled pizza boxes from delivery (clean, empty, and grease-free pizza boxes may be accepted for recycling by your program)
- Napkins and food-soiled paper towels
- Paper bags soiled with food or grease (if they are not soiled, put them in the recycling)
- Paper egg cartons (remove sticker labels)
- Paper towel and toilet paper rolls (while these are accepted for organics recycling, putting them in the recycling is preferred)

Not accepted:

- Asian takeout food pails (unless BPI certified)
- Butcher paper, parchment paper, wax paper, and muffin cups (unless BPI certified)

- Cartons, including milk cartons, juice boxes, and soup, broth, and wine cartons (these are accepted for recycling)
- Coated paper, such as the backing for stickers and labels and pull tabs from restaurants and bars
- Fast food wrappers, such as fry bags and burger or sandwich wrappers (unless BPI certified)
- Ice cream containers
- Microwave popcorn bags
- Paper printed with foil or other metallic elements, like glitter
- Paper products, including to-go coffee and drink cups, boats, bowls, and plates, without BPI certification
- Paper products, like paper towels and napkins, used with chemical-based cleaners
- Products labeled “biodegradable” or PLA (polylactic acid) that are not BPI certified
- Refrigerated and frozen food boxes
- Receipts
- Shredded paper
- Waxed cardboard produce boxes
- Wrapping paper, gift wrap, packing paper, and tissue paper

Other household items

Accepted:

- BPI certified compostable products including cups, plates, bowls, containers, utensils, straws, bags, bamboo products, bagasse products, and single-use coffee pods (must have the BPI logo or say BPI certified on the product or its container)
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Cotton swabs with paper stems
- Houseplants and flowers
- Paper tea bags (remove staples)
- Tea leaves
- Wooden items such as wood chopsticks, popsicle sticks, and toothpicks

Not accepted:

- Animal waste or litter
- Ash from fireplaces, barbecues, or fire pits
- Charcoal
- Cigarettes
- Cleaning and personal care wipes
- Cotton balls and swabs used with products like acetone, make-up, and paint
- Dental floss
- Diapers
- Dryer lint and dryer sheets
- Floor sweepings
- Incontinence products
- Latex products, including gloves and balloons
- Lumber and sawdust

- Medicines
- Menstrual products
- Plastic bags or containers that are not BPI certified
- Plastic, metal mesh, and synthetic tea bags
- Recyclable materials (glass bottles and jars; paper and cardboard; plastic bottles, jugs, cups, and containers; cartons; metal cans)
- Rocks, soil, and dirt
- Rubber and rubber bands
- Tape of any kind
- Vacuum cleaner bags and contents
- Wax and waxed products including wax paper (unless BPI certified), candle wax, car wax, and waxed bones
- Yard waste

Look for the logo (seen below) to verify if a product is certified compostable or visit:

www.bpiworld.org

