



## What Happens to Compost Once it Leaves the Curb?

[Composting](#) has become the norm in our region, and we are fortunate to be able to take part in a system that turns your food scraps into nutrient rich compost, and cuts down the amount of stuff filling up the landfill as well as methane gas emissions.

Most of us have become quite familiar with how to sort out what does and does not belong in our compost bins, but for many of us, that's where our knowledge about compost ends.

Have you ever wondered what becomes of the content of your compost bin after it is collected by Waste Management? The answer is more intricate than you might think!



The journey of compost begins at one of several local facilities, such as King County's primary resource, [Cedar Grove](#). Once your food scraps, yard clippings, and other compostable waste arrives, it is all poured into an industrial-sized grinder, making it easier for it to decompose. This material is then loaded into a temperature and oxygen-controlled system to break it down further, and then put in piles to air it out. Finally, this product is bagged up and prepared for sale in home and garden stores. It is also sold to local farms and commercial landscapers.

By disposing of your compostable material in the proper bin, you are contributing to an ecologically sustainable program. This complex cycle begins with you, so keep up the good work!

### Compost Bag Giveaway!

Do you have some great tips for Foodcycling? The first 20 people who submit suggestions will receive 10 compostable bags in the mail!



### Tips from Foodcyclers

We asked for tips from you and we got some great ones!

### Backyard vs. Curbside Composting:



We can all appreciate the convenience of being able to toss our compostables directly into our yard waste bins. However, some of us with particularly green thumbs might consider making our own compost to help grow our blooming gardens and lawns. Here are a few things to take into account if you're thinking about starting up a [backyard compost](#) pile:

**1. Quick Fix vs. DIY Project:** For some of us, our priority is to get our food scraps and yard waste out the door as soon as possible. But for those who enjoy the longer-term process of maintaining compost piles, holding bins, and turning systems, backyard

Here are a few suggestions that Foodcyclers have for maintaining backyard compost piles:

- "Coffee grounds all the way! The worms love it and it makes great soil." - Joy
- "Shredding or chopping your waste will make it break down faster." - Donovan
- "Taking care of your compost garden is like taking care of a pet. You need to make sure to give it an equal balance of wet green food, like grass and vegetable scraps, and dry brown food, like newspaper and dry leaves." - Rhonda

composting can be an exciting and fulfilling venture.

## **2. Carnivorous Lifestyle vs. Herbivorous Habits:**

Meat, fish, poultry, and dairy products are not recommended for backyard composting. If those foods comprise the bulk of your diet, curbside composting may be your better option for composting food scraps. Regardless of your diet, grass clippings, leaves, branches, and other yard waste make great compost.

**3. Cost vs. Cost:** Purchasing the materials for your backyard composting system may cost a bit at first, but you are saving money on compost in the long run. If curbside composting is a better option for you, [Waste Management](#) strives to make monthly rates reasonable and affordable.

If you would like to learn more about composting at home, please visit King County's Backyard Composting site by clicking [here](#).

Looking forward to the spring growing season!

Michelle Metzler  
Manager, Public Education & Outreach  
Pacific Northwest Area