

Contamination Reduction in Curbside Compost Carts Online Discussion Board Discussion Guide

Welcome!

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this online discussion! I'm really excited about the chance to learn about your experiences and challenges regarding your yard waste /composting service.

My name is Nancy Hardwick. My company Hardwick Research has been hired by Waste Management to conduct this research study. I will be the person you will be talking / typing with over the next week. I'm looking forward to learning from you. *[INCLUDE A PICTURE OF ME]*

During this process we will generally be communicating via the online discussion board, but if at any time you have questions feel free to call me at 206-232-9400.

If you have any technical difficulties, I might refer you to the super responsive tech support team with the online discussion board company I am using. It will depend on the nature of your question.

What you have agreed to:

As you know, the discussion will take place over the next week. New questions will be posted on Sunday (11/12), Tuesday (11/14) and Thursday (11/16) for you to answer. You will need to log in at your convenience each of those days to answer the posted questions. I will read your responses and may have some clarifying questions regarding what you shared, that you will need to circle back and respond to.

What you will receive in exchange for your participation:

This is a one-time task. In exchange for answering the three days of posted questions and answering any clarifying questions I post, you will receive a \$100 Amazon gift card. Your gift card will arrive via email about a week after the discussion is completed.

Who else is participating?

We are actually conducting these online one-on-one interviews with about 30 Waste Management Yard Waste / Compost customers. Speaking in-depth with 30 individuals will provide us with insight into a wide range of experiences and opinions regarding curbside yard waste / composting experiences. Although we are talking with 30 people, each discussion will remain private. That means they cannot see what you and I are discussing and you cannot see their responses either.

What we do with what we learn from you:

We will use the information from this discussion to design future communications regarding what can and cannot be placed in curbside yard waste compost carts.

Day 1 Tasks: Overall knowledge around curbside composting

- Q1. My understanding is that you have curbside yard waste / compost pickup service. What made you decide to sign up for this service initially? What are your reasons for continuing to use this service?
- Q2. What types of things does your household put in that cart? What do you call the cart? How often do you put it out for pick up? How, if at all, does your usage of the cart (what you put in it, how often you put it out for pick up, etc.) change based on the time of year?
- Q3. What do you do with your food scraps? Do you add food scraps to your yard waste cart? If so, what percentage of your food scraps end up in the yard waste cart? For this next question I'd like you to picture a grocery store paper bag. On a weekly basis, how much food scrap ends up in your yard waste cart? (In other words, how full would that paper bag be or how many paper bags full would you put in your yard waste cart in a typical week.)
- Q4. What happens to the contents of your yard waste cart once they leave your curb? Where does the yard and food debris end up? What happens to it next? How is it used, if at all? Is it important for you to know what happens after the debris leaves your curb? What makes you say that?
- Q5. Do you buy compost and use it on your property? Where did you purchase it? What are you using it for? Where did you place it?
- Q6. Disappointingly, we cannot go out to everyone's home and show them what can and cannot go into their curbside yard waste / compost cart. So one approach is to educate them by providing a brochure with pictures of what is or is not allowed.

Take a look at the images below. Some of these items can go into your curbside yard waste / compost cart and some cannot. Our goal is to use images that are not confusing and clearly look like the items we are attempting to portray.

Include images of:

- Weeds
- Grass clippings
- Fruit and Veggie scraps
- Meat and bones
- Egg shells
- Coffee Grounds
- Coffee Pods (plastic)
- Egg cartons
- Plastic shopping bags
- Plastic garbage bags
- Produce bags
- Compostable bags
- Glass bottles

- Produce stickers
- Plant markers
- Plant pots
- Coffee cups
- Wood
- Food-soiled paper examples
- Diaper
- Pet poop (in a pet poop bag)
- Pet poop (out of a pet poop bag)
- Clear plastic cup with a green marking

If there are any that you just have no idea what is pictured or are not sure what the item is, drag the image and drop it into the bag with the question mark.

- Q7. Here are those same images, this time with the answers written underneath each. Are there any that you thought you knew what they were, but now that you see the description you realize it's actually something else? If so, drag and drop those into the garbage can. That way we know which ones we need to redo.
- Q8. Yup, it's the same items again! This time, I would like you to sort them based on whether they can go into your curbside yard waste / compost cart or if they have to go into your recycle cart or garbage cart. Drag and drop each item based on where you think they should go.
- Q9. Thank you for playing along. Here are the correct answers for where each item should go.

Day 2 Tasks: Acceptable/Unacceptable Items Brochure Testing

- Q1. Take a look at this [recycling/composting guide](#). This is an example of something that might be sent to your home in the mail. What are your thoughts on this guide? Is it too much information, there right amount or too little? What makes you say that?
- Q2. **This is a cart tag. It's placed on your cart. What do you think about this? Is it helpful? What makes you say that?**
- Q3. What questions do you have that are not answered by these guides? What, if anything, is confusing? What specifically would you consider unnecessary and feel should be removed?
- Q4. Is it clear which items can be placed in your curbside yard waste / compost cart and which cannot? If not clear, please tell us what you finding confusing.
- Q5. Thinking about a recycling/composting guide sent to your home or something attached to your yard waste/compost cart, would you want the items pictured (that can or cannot be placed in the cart) be labeled or are the pictures alone enough?

- Q6. The word compostable is sometimes used in these informational materials. Can you tell me what you think is meant by the word “compostable”?
- Q7. Should we provide this all this information or just concentrate on the items people regularly place in their curbside yard waste / compost cart that they should not?
- Q8. There is one item that regularly ends up in curbside yard waste / compost carts that should not be there, what do you think it is?
- Programmer instructions: This is standard probe that I will ask of everyone. It will not be programmed in. The answer is actually plastic. Does that surprise you?*
- Q9. Thinking about your own experience at home, what specifically have you found to be confusing when deciding what to put in your curbside yard waste / compost cart? When you are unsure whether something is compostable, where do you put it?
- Q10. What type of information do you think will encourage people to only place approved items in their curbside yard waste / compost cart?

Day 3 Tasks: Message Placement

- Q1. There are many messages that could be used to tell people why it is important to keep non-compostable items out of curbside yard waste / compost carts. Our thought is that if we shared these reasons, people might be better about making sure the wrong items do not accidentally end up in the curbside yard waste / compost cart.

Programmer Instructions: Randomize the order these message/images are shown to participant. Show four different images/fliers (foodcycling, cart to garden, what goes in is what comes out, and safety) to participants one at a time. After each image/flier, ask the following questions:

What is this trying to tell you?

What, if anything, do you find confusing?

Is this information believable?

Does this provide enough information to cause Waste Management customers to change what items they place in their curbside yard waste cart?

- Q2. Now that you have seen all four potential messages, please rank this list in order based on which you think would be most effective in encouraging customers to be careful about what is placed in their curbside yard waste / compost cart.
- **Foodcycling** – Food waste from your table is turned into compost to grow new food
 - **Cart to Garden** – items from your curbside yard waste cart are composted and used to grow food on farms or in your garden
 - **What Goes in is What Comes Out** – by keeping plastic out of the compost bin, the compost generated from curbside yard waste is quality compost

- **Safety** – if glass is accidentally placed in a curbside yard waste cart the entire load is considered unusable. Broken glass in compost can hurt animals and people.
- **Potentially test the idea of “buy local” either through a potential message or included as an additional probe asked by Nancy (not programmed into the board). Is “buy local” motivational for them to know that their food scraps are turned into compost at a local company**

Q3. Do we even need a message like one of these four or is it good enough to just provide the list of what should and shouldn't be placed in the curbside yard waste / compost cart? What makes you say that?

Q4. Specifically, what information or materials would be most helpful for Waste Management customers to compost correctly?

Q5. Where would you prefer to get this type of information?

1. On my compost/garbage cart (tag or label/sticker)
2. In the mail
3. Via email
4. Social media like Facebook or Twitter
5. Online advertising such as advertising on YouTube
6. Traditional media channels such as TV and radio ads
7. At places you buy compost (home/garden stores)
8. Other (specify): _____

Q6. Who would you prefer to get this information from?

1. The company/facility that makes the compost
2. Workers at a compost facility
3. Your waste collection company who picks up your yard waste bin contents
4. King County
5. Farmers, Gardeners or Landscapers
6. Other (specify): _____

COMPOST MORE WASTE LESS

ACCEPTED IN
FOOD AND YARD WASTE BIN



NOT ACCEPTED IN
FOOD AND YARD WASTE BIN



QUESTIONS?
206.767.3322
RecycleFood.com



This is the existing Foodcyler graphic. For this one, I thought we could add some copy to this to give more context. And then create new pieces for Glass/Safety; Cart to Garden; and what goes in, comes out.