

Composting

What is Certifiably Green Denver?

The Certifiably Green Denver Program provides education and recognition for environmental achievement. Our free services are available to any business in the City and County of Denver.

Certifiably Green Denver offers:

- Assessments to identify water conservation and energy-efficiency options
- Information and assistance to meet your business needs
- Public recognition for your environmental efforts

Why Participate?

Compliance - Proper management practices help minimize wastes, reduce downtime, and keep you in compliance with regulations.

Cost Savings - Less waste means lower disposal and operating costs. Efficient use of materials, water, and energy saves money.

Public Image - Superior environmental practices affect your image with customers, the community, and regulatory agencies.

Public Recognition!

Certifiably Green Denver publicly recognizes certified businesses through free advertising. This includes Internet listings and advertising in the newspaper, magazines, radio, and water bill inserts. Certified businesses receive a framed certificate and window decal.

What is Composting?

Estimates show that as much as 70% of a commercial kitchen's waste is made up of organic material like food scraps and soiled paper towels. On average, a single restaurant disposes of more than 50 tons of organic waste every year. This type of material, if kept out of the waste stream, can be recycled into an earth-friendly product such as compost.

Composting is the practice of mixing various organic materials together, where if properly aerated, microorganisms consume the material and leave behind a nutrient rich product called humus, mulch or compost. The composting process takes approximately 3 months. The nutritious soil conditioner is used to replenish existing soil to foster healthy plant growth.

Environmental Benefits of Composting

The decomposition of food and other organic waste materials under anaerobic (without oxygen) conditions in landfills produces methane, a greenhouse gas (GHG) 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Landfills are the second human-related source of methane in the United States, accounting for greater than 20 percent of all methane emissions. Reducing, recovering, and recycling divert organic materials from landfills and incinerators, thereby reducing GHG emissions from landfills and waste combustion. The use of recycled food waste (compost) has a myriad of environmental benefits such as improving soil health and structure, increasing drought resistance, as well as reducing, and even eliminating, the need for supplemental water, fertilizers and pesticides. Think of it as "feeding the soil".

An additional benefit of food waste composting is improved sanitation, public safety and health for both your facility and community. Food wastes dumped in standard waste dumpsters of the restaurant can attract rodents, insects, and other problem visitors – as well as smell really bad. By placing food in a closed container which is nonabsorbent, leak proof, durable, and easily cleanable, then having it frequently picked up for composting you can significantly reduce, and even eliminate these problems.



Getting Started

Begin by conducting a waste audit so you'll know where to start, as well as to gain an understanding of what is in your waste stream and just how much you are throwing away. Finding out where and when you are generating waste is the first step to being able to reduce your waste and save money.

The baseline information also serves as a marker for measuring your diversion rate, and change in spending. By measuring the amount of both pre- and post-consumer food waste, businesses can inventory food trim and scraps they are generating and then implement source reduction practices to save money and reduce waste.

Post-consumer waste includes plate waste and order returns. Consider:

- Portion control – eliminate excessive portion sizes;
- Trayless dining – especially in school, military and institutional cafeterias; and
- Menu modifications – pay attention to entrees and sides that are left on the diner's plate.

What Materials can be Composted?

Your compost service provider will provide you with a detailed list of which items they accept. In general, the following guidelines apply:

Examples of Acceptable Materials

All food waste & trimmings including: *Other compostable materials:*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Fruits and vegetables | • Corrugated boxes |
| • Meats, poultry, seafood & bones | • Pizza boxes |
| • Cheese, yogurt | • Paper egg cartons |
| • Cooked food | • Paper napkins and towels |
| • Coffee grounds and filters | • Compostable straws & tableware |
| • Breads, pasta and grains | |
| • Egg shells | |

Examples of Unacceptable Materials

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| • All plastic materials | • Glass |
| • Food handler gloves | • Metals |
| • Styrofoam® | • Aluminum foil |

Composting Service Providers

The following companies offer compost pick-up service to commercial buildings:

- A1 Organics, <http://www.a1organics.com>, 970-673-6184
- Waste Management, <http://www.wm.com>, 877-394-4814
- Alpine Waste & Recycling, www.alpinewaste.com, 303-625-6793

Helpful Resources

See the Certifiably Green Denver website for more helpful resource sheets:

www.denvergov.org/CGD

Please note that the business listings are provided for informational purposes only. It is not an endorsement by Certifiably Green Denver of any business or service. If you are a service provider and would like to be added to this list, or to update information on this list, please phone Certifiably Green Denver at 720-865-5457.



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Contact Information

Janet Burgess

Program Manager

Certifiably Green Denver

200 W 14th Avenue, Dept 310

Denver, CO 80204