

Factual highlights of the Green Bin program

Recently, there have been some media reports about the City's Green Bin organics collection program that questioned its value as a waste diversion tool and the quality of resulting compost. The City has replied, setting the record straight about this valued program and wants to share the factual highlights with you. The Green Bin program works and is well worth doing.

Diversion: Toronto's reported rate of 44% diversion of waste from landfill in 2008 is reliable because we use a standardized formula used by all Ontario municipalities to calculate waste diversion. This accounting method specifically removes the residue that goes to landfill from diversion statistics and only reports on material that is actually composted or recycled.

Use of plastic bags: Toronto's program maximizes convenience for residents which includes being able to use plastic bags (to line and contain organic materials). Other jurisdictions may not need to allow plastic bags but Toronto, with 500,000 multi-family homes, does. Because we've made the program easy to use, we've maintained high levels of participation from day one and produced one of the highest rates of compost per household in Ontario.

What goes to landfill: Any plastic entering our system is removed as residue (garbage) and it goes to landfill. This plastic residue was planned for, is accounted for and is included in our statistics as garbage, not as diversion. Toronto's Green Bin organic material does not go directly to landfill or incineration, but is processed to be turned into compost.

Compost quality: Our compost is an excellent soil amendment and a sustainable resource that meets strict Ministry of the Environment standards. It is not prohibitively high in sodium and is meant to be used as a soil conditioner and mixed with soil.

As residents, you have every reason to be proud of Toronto's Green Bin program and your role in it. You have helped make it one of the first, largest, most effective successful waste diversion programs in North America.

Learn more facts about the Green Bin at www.toronto.ca/greenbin