



Going Green in Toronto

ISSUE 1 – SEPTEMBER 2004



INTRODUCING... THE GREEN BIN PROGRAM

Starting the week of October 18, you will be part of a new waste collection initiative in Toronto, East York and York called the Green Bin Program.

By collecting your organic materials—such as food waste and soiled paper food packaging (see Page 3 for details)—the Green Bin Program will help us to reduce the amount of material that Toronto households send to landfill.

What's so great about the Green Bin Program?

Two things. One, landfill is an expensive way to dispose of our garbage. And two, reusing organic material is good for the environment.

The City's Keele Valley landfill site closed in 2002, and Toronto now trucks all its waste to Michigan. As a result, our waste disposal costs have increased from \$12/tonne to \$52/tonne. That's more than a 300% increase!

Organic materials make up approximately 30% of the garbage going to landfill. The Green Bin Program "diverts" that material from landfill and turns it into useful compost instead.

More than 95% of residents have been successfully participating in the Green Bin Program in Etobicoke and Scarborough since the program rolled out to those communities in September 2002 and June 2003, respectively.

What do I need to do?

The Green Bin Program is easy to follow. All you have to do is put your organic household materials (the "smelly stuff"), such as food waste and soiled paper food products, out for collection once a week. The City takes your organic material to a processing plant where it is turned into compost for farms and parks.

Am I eligible for the Green Bin Program?

If the City provides you with door-to-door garbage collection at your curb, yes—you will be participating in the Green Bin Program.

Who will not participate in the program at this time:

- Residents who live in North York (green bin rolls out to this community in 2005).
- Those with a common collection point or who have their garbage collected privately—e.g. apartments and some townhouses.



How does the garbage and recycling collection schedule change?

The City has already provided a 2004-2005 garbage, recycling and green bin calendar to every household receiving curbside collection by the city. Your calendar is an essential household tool that spells out your collection schedule.

- 1** Your green bin for organics (that's the smelly stuff) will be collected *once every week*.
- 2** Your garbage (the stuff that doesn't usually smell) will be collected *every two weeks*.
- 3** Your recycling materials will continue to be collected every second week.
- 4** Your yard waste will continue to be collected weekly in April, May, October and November, and every second week during June, July, August and September (check your calendar for actual dates).

The important thing to remember is that most of what you think of as "garbage" today will no longer be garbage with the Green Bin Program. All your organic material (food waste, soiled paper towels, meat, fish, kitty litter, animal waste, diapers) will be picked up every week in your green bin.

The items left in your garbage will be things such as non-recyclable plastic packaging, plastic wrap, broken toys and dishes, light bulbs, worn-out running shoes and such; in other words, all the dry items that do not have any odour and can be stored for two weeks.

HOW DOES THE GREEN BIN PROGRAM WORK?

The City of Toronto will supply you with two bins – a large one with wheels that you can take to the curb, and a small one that can fit under your kitchen sink or anywhere that is convenient for you.

You can manage the "yuck factor" by using plastic bags to line either your indoor kitchen container (used grocery bags are fine), or your green bin. There is no need to line both bins. By lining your kitchen container, you don't have to handle the organics twice. Just remove the full plastic bag from your indoor container and toss it in your outdoor green bin—twisted or loosely tied, if possible, as it helps us separate the plastic from the organics at the processing facility.

The bins will be delivered to your home in September or early October.



What happens to your organic material?

Your green bin material will be picked up at the curb by collection vehicles, placed into one of two compartments in the back of the truck, and taken to the City's organics processing facility. Operators inspect the organics and remove large, unwanted items. A biological process called "anaerobic digestion" converts the material into solids, which is then turned into clean, rich compost.

Anaerobic digestion is a biological process that uses bacteria to break down solids in the absence of oxygen



What to put (and not put) in your green bin

- ## Into the green bin...
- Fruits, vegetable scraps
 - Meat, shellfish, fish products
 - Pasta, bread, cereal
 - Dairy products, egg shells
 - Coffee grounds, filters, tea bags
 - Soiled paper towels, tissues
 - Soiled paper food packaging: fast food paper packaging, ice cream boxes, muffin paper, flour and sugar bags
 - Paper coffee cups (no lids), paper plates
 - Candies, cookies, cake
 - Baking ingredients, herbs, spices
 - Household plants, including soil
 - Diapers, sanitary products
 - Animal waste, bedding (e.g. from bird/hamster cages), kitty litter
 - Pet food

Not

into the green bin...

These items do not break down and, therefore, cannot be turned into compost.

- Plastic wrap, baggies, sandwich bags
- Plastic items such as food containers (e.g. yogurt or margarine tubs), cutlery
- Plastic milk bags
- Styrofoam, meat tray liners
- Foil
- Wax paper
- Leather, textiles, clothing
- Cigarette butts, tobacco
- Corks (from wine bottles, etc.)
- Gum
- Cotton swabs/balls
- Baby wipes
- Disposable mop sheets
- Dryer lint, dryer sheets
- Vacuum cleaner bags and contents
- Hair, pet fur, feathers
- Fireplace or BBQ ashes
- Wood products, wood chips





GO AHEAD! CONTINUE TO COMPOST!

If you use a backyard composter, we encourage you to continue composting. What's great about the Green Bin Program is that it accepts materials you can't compost at home; for example, animal waste, meat, fish products and diapers.

WATCH FOR STUDENTS COMING TO YOUR DOOR

The City of Toronto has hired students to go door to door this summer and fall to tell residents about the Green Bin Program. You may already have had someone knock at your door (they started in June).

The students are there to answer your questions about the program. Please make the most of them! Communication and understanding will help make the Green Bin Program run smoothly.

But don't worry if you missed their visit: you will be receiving lots of information over the next few months.

Optical Illusion!

While it may look from your window as though the garbage collectors are tossing your garbage and your green bin organics into the same place in the back of the truck, the truck actually has two separate compartments—one of which is dedicated to green bin material.



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ANY QUESTIONS? NEED MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any questions about the Green Bin Program, please call City of Toronto Customer Service at 416-338-2010 or check out our web site at www.toronto.ca/greenbin. Also available on the Web site: a five-minute video explaining the green bin program.

Pour recevoir ces renseignements en français, appelez le 416 338-2010.

Per avere queste informazioni in italiano si prega di chiamare il 416-338-2010.

Para matanggap ninyo ang impormasyong ito sa Tagalog, mangyaring tumawag lamang sa 416-338-2010.

Για να λάβετε αυτές τις πληροφορίες στα ελληνικά, τηλεφωνήστε στο 416-338-2010.

Muốn nhận thông tin này bằng tiếng Việt, xin gọi số 416-338-2010.

Aby otrzymać tą informację w języku polskim, prosimy dzwonić: 416 338-2010.

如欲索取中文資料，請致電416-338-2010。

આ માહિતી ગુજરાતીમાં મેળવવા માટે, મહેલમાંની સહીને 416-338-2010 પર સંપર્ક લાવો.

برای دریافت این بروشور به زبان فارسی، لطفاً با شماره تلفن ۴۱۶-۳۳۸-۲۰۱۰ تماس بگیرید.

இந்த விபரத்தை தமிழில் பெறுவதற்கு அழைக்கவும்: 416 338 2010.

یہ معلومات اردو میں حاصل کرنے کیلئے فون کریں: 416-338-2010

Para receber estas informações em português, queira telefonar para o 416-338-2010.

Para recibir esta información en español, sírvase llamar al 416-338-2010.