



zero|waste

B e y o n d R e c y c l i n g

THE GREEN BIN – IT'S WORKING!

Thanks to your efforts, the food waste collection pilot project shows we can take a big bite out of our household garbage!

The curbside food waste collection pilot project got off to a successful start last fall. Most households have adapted well to their new collection schedules and are doing a great job of ensuring their food waste and other compostable materials go into their green bins instead of the garbage.

It's been just a few months since the project was launched but initial results have exceeded expectations. Our surveys of routes have shown

that on average between 70 and 80% of households put out their green bin every week. Thanks to the efforts of you and your neighbours, you have dramatically reduced the amount of garbage taken to the curb, saving landfill space, reducing greenhouse gases and making useful compost.

How we're keeping score

Garbage collected on the three pilot project routes is weighed and recorded at the Regional Landfill or Church Road Transfer Station. Likewise, food and other compostables collected from green bins on each route is weighed and recorded at International Composting Corporation, where the materials are processed into compost. This information enables us to track the impact of the green bin program.

program, the amount of waste that pilot project participants are diverting from the landfill rises to 70%. That compares with an average diversion rate of 30% for households that aren't using the green bin. It's a huge improvement and if introduced region-wide, would put us well on our way to achieving our Zero Waste Plan goal of sending 75% less garbage to the landfill by 2010.

As a pilot project participant, you can take pride in knowing that you are making a difference. For every tonne of food waste diverted to compost almost a tonne of greenhouse gas emission reductions is achieved. Congratulations for having a positive impact on the environment and helping to develop sustainable waste management practices for the region.

Results to date and their impact

In the first four months since the pilot project was launched more than 76 tonnes of food waste and other compostable material has been collected, enough to fill 13 garbage trucks. At this rate as much as 280 tonnes of food waste could be collected from the 2,000 participating homes during the 12-month trial period. That exceeds our initial estimates by over 40%.

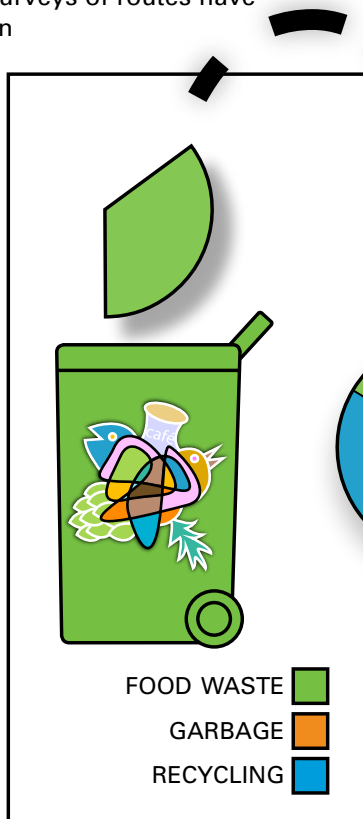
When the weight of food waste collected is added to the paper, metal, and plastic recycled through the curbside

TELL US HOW IT'S WORKING

Thanks to everyone who took the time to attend the pilot project open houses and to provide us with feedback by phone or email.

We are now asking you to complete a brief survey on the project's start-up. Households submitting completed surveys will be eligible for a \$50 grocery voucher – one prize drawn from each collection route.

Please see the attached survey. It provides details on how the survey can be completed and returned on-line or by hand and mailed or dropped-off.



YOU ASKED US... QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT FOOD WASTE RECYCLING



What is the difference between compostable and biodegradable liner bags?

Compostable liner bags are made of materials that break down during composting into carbon and water and leave no visually distinguishable or toxic residues. Liner bags that are certified as compostable for use in a composting facility must meet specified standards such as how quickly they breakdown, the maximum material leftover after a specified time and that the material has no harmful effect on the final compost or composting facility.

Biodegradable plastic bags will eventually breakdown as a result of bacterial activity but may leave visible traces in the compost product and as such are not certified for use in a composting facility.

If you choose to use a bag to line your kitchen container or green bin, it must be compostable. Look for the "Compostable" logo to ensure the bags that you buy are approved for use in a composting system. **Do not use plastic or biodegradable bags.**



Where can I buy more compostable liner bags?

You can buy compostable bags at 49th Parallel Grocery (Ladysmith), Fairway Market (Nanaimo), Home Hardware (Brooks Landing Nanaimo), Thrifty Foods (Nanaimo, Parksville), Home Depot (Nanaimo), Wal-Mart (Nanaimo), The Green Store (Port Place Mall Nanaimo), Heaven on Earth Natural Foods (Qualicum Beach), and Dolly's Home Hardware (Qualicum Beach). Acceptable brands include BioBag, Biosak, EcoFilm, Compost-A-Bag, Eco-Safe-6400 and EnviroSmart, Great Value (Wal-Mart brand), and Al-Pak Compost Bags.

We are working with retailers to expand the number of outlets selling compostable liner bags and will add these locations to the "Compostable Bags" section of the pilot project Website (www.rdnfoodwaste.ca).

Should I use my garburator?

Recycling your food waste through your green bin is more cost effective and environmentally-sound than using a garburator. Food waste disposed of in garburators uses valuable resources such as water and electricity and puts an added load on sewage treatment facilities where it must be processed at a higher cost than recycling. Food waste collected from your green bin is turned into a useful saleable product - compost, rather than becoming waste requiring greater disposal and energy costs.

Is it safe to put used tissues and paper towels in the green bin?

Yes. Used tissues and paper towels are composted along with food waste and other compostable materials at International Composting Corporation's (ICC) licensed facility. ICC uses a process that generates temperatures sufficient to ensure maximum pathogen reduction. The finished products include compost, fertilizers, and soil amendments, all of which meet international standards.

YOUR GREEN BIN... NOT JUST FOR FOOD SCRAPS

Many household compostable materials besides food waste are accepted in your green bin, including:

Pizza boxes

Ice cream cartons,
milk and cream
cartons

Coffee filters, tea bags

Used paper cups
and plates

Soiled paper towels
and tissues

Houseplants, cut and
dried flowers

Yard and garden waste and anything containing contaminants such as plastic, metal, Styrofoam or foil, including juice boxes and other Tetra Pak containers should not be placed in your green bin.

INFO ON THE FOOD WASTE PILOT PROJECT JUST A CLICK AWAY

Misplaced your collection schedule, need a list of acceptable compostable materials or want an update on the progress of the pilot project? The food waste collection pilot project Website is a quick and easy resource with a helpful list of answers to frequently asked questions.

To access the food waste pilot project Website, point your Web browser to www.rdnfoodwaste.ca and when prompted, enter

compost as the password.



RESIDENTIAL FOOD WASTE COLLECTION PARTICIPANTS' SURVEY – WINTER 2008

The RDN and its partners in the Residential Food Waste Collection Pilot Project are asking participating households to complete the following survey. Your participation and input will help the participating municipalities and the regional district better prepare for a potential region-wide program.

Options for completing and sending the survey:

1. Click on the survey link at www.rdnfoodwaste.ca (you will need to enter **compost** as the password).
Completing the survey on-line is easy and will speed compiling results.
2. By hand – Detach the survey, check the appropriate boxes and print your comments. You can:
 - Mail the survey to: RDN Environmental Services, 6300 Hammond Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 6N2
 - Drop the survey at: **Qualicum Beach Municipal Office** (Town Hall), **Ravensong Aquatic Centre**, **Oceanside Place Arena**, **RDN Administration Office** (6300 Hammond Bay Road), **City of Nanaimo Public Works** (2020 Labieux Road), **North Cedar Improvement District office** (2100 Yellow Point Road)

Deadline: Completed surveys must be received by March 28, 2008

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1. **I live in:** Chartwell City of Nanaimo (Route E-3) Cedar (Route 52)
 2. **My household has:** 1 - 2 people 3 - 5 people 6+ people
 3. **I put out the green bin:** Every week Every two weeks Seldom Don't participate

If you are not participating please tell us why: _____

When the project started we provided you with collection containers and an information package. Please help us evaluate the various items by responding to these questions.

4. The start up information brochure was:

- Very useful and informative Somewhat useful and informative It was okay I guess
Not very useful and informative It left me with more questions than answers

Comments on the information brochure: _____

-
5. **I attended an open house information session:** Yes No

Comments on the open house: _____

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6. **I have visited the Website: (www.rdnfoodwaste.ca)** Often Once or twice Never

7. **I found the Website:** Useful and informative Not useful I forgot the password

Comments on Website: _____

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8. **I found the schedule and collection information to be:** Useful and easy to follow
Okay but it took a while to figure it all out Confusing and it made starting the project difficult

Comments on the schedule: _____

Please tell us about the bins and bags that were provided:

9. I would rate the green bin as:

Excellent, the right size and well designed Good but some annoyances (list below)
Adequate for the job Fair but could be greatly improved (list below) I don't like it at all

Comments on the green bin: _____

10. I would rate the kitchen collector as:

Excellent, the right size and well designed Good but some annoyances (list below)
Adequate for the job Fair but could be greatly improved (list below) I don't like it at all

Comments on the kitchen collector: _____

11. I would rate the compostable bags provided at the start as:

Excellent, perform well Good Adequate Fair Poor

Comments on compostable bags provided: _____

12. Which of the following statements best describes your household:

We do not have a backyard composter We backyard compost so we don't use the green bin at all
We backyard compost but use the green bin for food waste and other compostable materials

13. Which of the following best describes the impact of the green bin on the amount of garbage you put out:

We can tell there is a difference There is no difference that we can tell
I am using more garbage tags than before the pilot project started I am not using more garbage tags

General comments about food waste collection (what you like and don't like):

Please enter my name in the draw for a \$50 grocery voucher.

Name: _____ Phone or Email address: _____

Thank you for participating in this survey!

Opportunity to participate in a focus group session

As part of gathering feedback on the pilot project, the RDN, City of Nanaimo and Town of Qualicum Beach will hold a focus group session in the Spring. A random selection of residents from each route will be invited to share their experiences and answer questions. To be considered, please provide your contact details below.

Yes I am interested in participating in a focus group. I understand I may be contacted if my name is selected.

Name: _____ Phone or Email address: _____

MORE INFORMATION ?

For more info about the Food Waste Collection Pilot Project or the survey, please contact:

RDN Environmental Services, Solid Waste Department

Ph. 250-390-6560 (Nanaimo area) or 250-954-3792 (Parksville-Qualicum area)

Email: foodwastepilot@rdn.bc.ca Website: www.rdnfoodwastepilot.ca



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