



# Green Can Q & A

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**Q.** Is the kitchen food scrap program mandatory; do I have to do it?

**A.** Starting in January 2015, kitchen scraps are banned from the landfills in Metro Vancouver (yard waste is already banned). This means that all 24 member municipalities are required to have a mandatory Green Can program.

**Q.** Why is having food scraps in the garbage a problem?

**A.** When food and other organic materials end up in the garbage they use up a lot of precious landfill space. Space is limited, and creating more landfills is undesirable. Over 30% of what we send to the landfill in our region is compostable organics.

Perhaps, more importantly, when organic materials such as food scraps and yard waste break down inside a landfill site where there is no oxygen, they generate methane. Methane is greenhouse gas that is 23 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. For every tonne of food scraps and yard waste kept out of landfill, a tonne of greenhouse gas is not created. Currently, 67% of the methane gas produced in our region comes from Landfills.

**Q.** Are there environmental advantages?

**A.** Yes. By adding food scraps to your Green Can, you'll be making a direct contribution to cleaner air.

**Q.** If I have a backyard composter, can I continue using it?

**A.** Absolutely. However, some types of food scraps cannot be put in backyard composters (meat, bones, fish, dairy products or grease). Use your Green Can for the food scraps that cannot.

**Q.** Are other cities collecting kitchen food scraps for composting?

**A.** Under the Metro Vancouver Regional Waste Strategy, which sets a target of 70% diversion of waste from landfill by 2015, 24 local governments are obligated to introduce programs to divert kitchen and yard organics from disposal in landfill by 2015.

**Q.** What can I put into my Green Can?

**A.**

Kitchen scraps including:

- fruits & vegetables
- meat, poultry, fish
- Bones
- Cheese
- fats & oils
- breads & grains
- shredded paper
- cardboard egg cartons
- coffee filters
- tea bags
- paper towels, napkins
- pizza boxes

Yard waste including:

- fresh green garden waste
- twigs
- small branches and pruning (tie branches in bundles 1m X 60cm, 34kg maximum)
- Christmas trees
- wood chips, shavings
- leaves, weeds, plants, flowers
- grass & clippings
- straw
- pumpkins

**Q.** What should not go into my Green Can?

**A.** Do not put in:

- rocks, soil, sod, stumps
- animal waste
- painted/treated wood
- branches over 3" in diameter
- anything plastic including biodegradable or regular bags and diapers

**Q.** How do I set up a kitchen scrap collection system in my home?

**A.** The easiest way is to put kitchen scraps into a newspaper-lined container with a lid that you keep handy in the kitchen. You can buy a specialty kitchen scrap container or reuse a larger container that you have around the house, such as an empty ice cream tub.

**Q.** What if I live in an apartment or condo?

**A.** The ban on organics from the landfill still applies. However, your household waste is collected by private contractors. Contact your building management or strata about a kitchen food scraps collection program.

- Q.** Can I use a plastic bag to collect kitchen scraps and then put the plastic bag into the kitchen scraps/yard waste collection bin?
- A.** No. Plastic bags of all types are NOT acceptable; not even the biodegradable ones. Biodegradable plastic bags do not compost quickly enough and leave plastic residue in the compost.
- Q.** How much garbage will be left over once we add kitchen scraps to our yard waste collection program?
- A.** Together recyclables and organic materials (kitchen scraps and yard trimmings) make up 60% to 70% of your household waste. That leaves about one third of your waste as regular, non-odorous garbage.
- Q.** Is there a limit to how much I put out in Green Can and garbage?
- A.** There is no limit for Green Can – put it out weekly. The limit for garbage is two 80-litre cans or bags once every two weeks.
- Q.** What if my yard waste collection bin is already full?
- A.** You can have as many Green Cans as you like. However, each Green Can must be marked with a yellow City of Langley Green Can sticker. Place the can at the street with the yellow sticker facing the street so the collector knows it is a Green Can. Additional stickers are available at Langley City Hall.
- Q.** How will the collector know which bin(s) are Green Cans?
- A.** Each Green Can must be marked with a yellow Green Can sticker. Place the can at the street with the yellow sticker facing the street so the collector knows it is a Green Can. Additional stickers are available at City Hall.
- Q.** How do I keep the bin from getting messy when liquid from the kitchen scraps collects in the bottom?
- A.** You can reduce the amount of liquid that collects in the bottom of your Green Can by lining it with old newspaper or cardboard and mixing yard trimmings in with the kitchen scraps. Refer to the Green Can Tips for ideas on how to set up a convenient kitchen scraps collection system.

- Q.** Why can't I use a bigger collection can like the big green wheeled carts some municipalities use?
- A.** You already have a Green Can and using a commercially-available, 80-litre can is the most cost-effective method of collecting yard trimmings and kitchen scraps.
- Q.** How will I keep wildlife from getting into the Green Can?
- A.** Follow the procedures you would normally use for your garbage. Ensure you have a tight fitting lid and, if possible, store your Green Can in a secure place, e.g., inside your garage or garden shed, until it is time to put it at the curb (by 7:30 a.m. on your collection day).
- Q.** What do I do with leaves that won't fit into the Green Can?
- A.** You can put leaves in a double-ply, water resistant, compostable kraft bags specifically designed for green waste. They are available at retail stores.



**For further information see the [Garbage, Recycling and Green Can](http://city.langley.bc.ca) page on our website at [city.langley.bc.ca](http://city.langley.bc.ca)**