

# City of Laurel Organics Recycling Program



- ▶ Evolution of the Program:
  - ▶ August 2019 Pilot Program - 200 participants. Cost of the program startup \$16K.
  - ▶ 2020 - 2021 COVID! Program growth slowed down - lack of staff and materials.
  - ▶ 2022 - Kick-start the program by introducing One and Done (one day per week for trash; accompanied by the recycling collection).
  - ▶ It didn't work.....
  - ▶ 2023 - Introduced to Mayor and Council, legislation mandating that organics recycling become mandatory for all single-family; town-homes and condos in July 2025. Non-compliance will be subject to monetary penalties.
  - ▶ 2023/2024 - Developed kick-off campaign with improved educational information and began city-wide deployment of organics recycling kits (educational packet, kitchen countertop container and outside locked container).
  - ▶ 2025 - completing deployment of carts to all residents - created "Composting Ambassadors" throughout the City.

# Compliance

## Legislation, Education and Citations.

- ▶ Ordinance 2010 -- Adds the definitions of compost; composting; composting facility; organic waste and green waste.
  - ▶ Establishes the organics composting program; defines separation of materials; and provides an effective date for the mandatory separation of organics from the waste stream.
  - ▶ Defines Public Education and enforcement and provides an effective date for education and outreach.
- ▶ Compliance: Rehrig's Vision Suite - The RFID reader, observation panel and camera will allow the driver to "tag" a collection using preassigned areas of concern - i.e., trash overflow; mixed trash (RSP in trash); recycling in trash; plastic bags in recycling, etc.
  - ▶ "tagged" item is transmitted to staff for review
  - ▶ A picture is included with a letter stating the issues along with educational information on correcting the problem. There is a controlled escalation of education and outreach before we get to the citation stage. Tagged and left at curb; Letter with picture; Letter with violation and associated municipal infraction; Citation.
- ▶ The RFID reader will also flag carts that are at the incorrect address, allowing staff to better monitor overall City participation in recycling and composting, stay on top of our inventory so that we can order carts in a timely manner and save resources by focusing on problem areas.

# Documents Library

## What Can I Compost?

### WHAT CAN I COMPOST?



[Click here to download](#)

## Why Should I Compost?



[Click here to download](#)

## Composting is as Easy as 1,2,3!



[Click here to download](#)

 CITY OF  
**LAUREL**  
MARYLAND

Government      Community      Business      Services      How Do I...

Report Issues      Social Media      Get Alerts

Search... 

8103

## Organics Recycling (Composting) Program



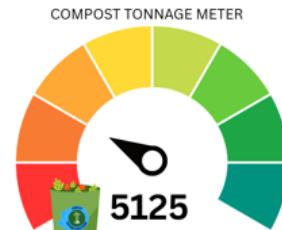
Organics Recycling, also known as composting, plays an integral role in eliminating organic waste, such as food scraps, from landfills. The City of Laurel is proud of our [mandatory](#) Residential Organics Recycling Program. All City of Laurel residents living in single-family homes and townhomes received a 35-gallon or 12-gallon curbside composting cart and a 2-gallon countertop composting bin.

*If you live in an apartment or condo and would like to participate, please reach out to your property management company.*

The City of Laurel's Organics Recycling program is managed by the Department of Public Works. If you have not received your composting carts or bins, please submit a request via [DPW's Organics Recycling](#) page.

### COMPOSTING IN LAUREL

COMPOST TONNAGE METER



5125 TONS

\*Based off of City of Laurel waste diversion goal of 50%

WE SAVED THE EQUIVALENT OF PLANTING 686 TREES AND LETTING THEM GROW FOR A DECADE

12% WASTE REDUCED FROM LANDFILLS



300 MT CH<sub>4</sub> METHANE REDUCTION



X% OF HOMES IN LAUREL COMPOSTING



TIPPING FEES SAVED \$600



Download the Quarterly Composting Report Here!

The City of Laurel is committed to reducing organic waste and improving sustainability. Throughout the year, we collect data during waste pick-up using visual identification and RFID technology. This helps us understand how well we're meeting our waste diversion goals, how different neighborhoods and groups are performing, and how we can improve our efforts moving forward. Your participation makes a difference—thank you for helping us build a cleaner, greener Laurel!

Search...



Organics Recycling (Composting) Program

Composting - Easy as 1,2,3

Compost Like a Pro: Composting Hacks

Composting Resources and FAQs

## Composting - Easy as 1,2,3

### How Does Composting Work?

1. Line your kitchen countertop compost bin with a 3-gallon composting bag to help keep it clean.
2. As needed, dispose of compostable organic waste in your kitchen countertop compost bin.
3. As the 3-gallon bags fill up throughout the week, transfer them to your outdoor composting cart.
4. On your designated refuse collection day, place your outdoor composting cart at your curbside for weekly collection.



### Composting Reminder

**Do not use plastic bags for composting!** Bags for countertop bins can be purchased at the [Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center \(City Hall\)](#) on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays or at the Laurel Farmer's Market on Thursdays (cash-only). [Maryland Environmental Science \(MES\)-approved](#) compostable bags can also be purchased online or from the [local Giant Food grocery store](#). Brown paper shopping bags can be used as an alternative.



### What is Compostable?

- Kitchen Paper Towels
- Leaping Bunny-Approved Kitchen Paper Products\*
- Food-Soiled Newspaper
- Paper Ice Cream Containers
- Pizza boxes
- Raw and Cooked Eggs, Meat, and Seafood (including shells and bones)
- Tea bags and Loose Tea Leaves
- Uncoated and/or Compostable Tableware (plates and utensils)
- Animal Hair
- Bread, Pasta, and Grains
- Coffee Grounds and Filters
- Compostable Bags
- Corrugated Fruit and Vegetable Boxes
- Dairy Products (without containers)
- Food Waste
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Grass Clippings and/or Leaves

\* Cleaning products with the Leaping Bunny logo (  ) are not tested on animals and can be placed in your composting containers along with the paper towels used with these products.



### What is NOT Compostable?

- Yard Debris (including all branches and sticks)\*\*
- Pet Waste
- Paper Products with a waxy plastic lining
- Keurig Coffee Pods
- Raw Dough
- Paper Towels used with chemical cleaning products
- Plastic
- Medicine
- Dryer lint

\*\*Reach out to the Laurel Department of Public Works (DPW) to request a [Yard Debris Pickup](#).

Download a printable version to hang near your bin here.

LAUREL  
MARYLAND

Government Community Business Services How Do I...

Report Issue Social Media Get Alerts

Search

8101

## Compost Like a Pro: Composting Hacks

Here are some tips to reduce odors and keep pests away from your kitchen countertop compost bin:

### Hacks to Keep Your Composting Clean & Green

- All City-issued kitchen countertop compost bins come with lids. **be sure to keep lids closed!**
- Visit the MES-approved list of [compostable bags](#) to find recommended vendors for larger curbside cart liners/bags.
- Keep your kitchen countertop bin and curbside cart out of the direct sun.**
- Line the bottom of your compost bin with a layer of newspaper and sprinkle with baking soda to help with moisture absorption.
- Freeze compost directly in the provided bag before placing them in the composting bin.
- Spray your compost with a mixture of organic essential oils and water to keep away pests.
- Dry your compost bin before adding a new liner.
- Wash your produce thoroughly to prevent fruit flies.

### Banana Peel Fruit Fly Trap

- 1 Place a banana peel in a clear container.
- 2 Cover container with lid and poke holes in the top.
- 3 Place the container on the countertop next to your fruit or composting bin.



### Apple Cider Vinegar Trap

Use a small bowl, cup, or jar. Pour in about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of **apple cider vinegar** — this is the bait that attracts fruit flies.

- 1 Pour apple cider vinegar into a small bowl.
- 2 Add 1-2 drops of **dish soap** to the vinegar. This breaks the surface tension so the flies sink and can't escape once they land.
- 3 Cover the container with plastic wrap and poke a few small holes. Place the trap near fruit bowls, trash cans, or sinks.



### Why Should You Compost?

**Green Gold:** Composting reduces the need for pricy and harmful chemical fertilizers. It helps to keep plants healthier without harming the ecosystem.

**Reduce Climate Change Impacts**  
Methane is a powerful heat-trapping greenhouse gas. Landfills are the third-largest source of methane emissions. Diverting organic waste from the trash and into your compost cart can help to reduce methane emissions.



**No More Trash Overflow:** By using your compost cart to divert organic waste, you can reduce the amount of trash in your trash can and say goodbye to unsightly overflow.

**Eco-Friendly and Fabulous:** Help the planet by cutting down on waste.

**Stop the Wildlife Picnics:** Your compost cart has a lock to keep out unwanted furry visitors. This will help keep your trash and recycling critter free.

**Shrink the Landfill and Save Big Bucks:** Composting helps municipalities slash tipping fees and keep taxpayer money in their pockets. The tipping fee for trash is currently \$85 per ton and will be raised to \$90 per ton on July 1, 2026. In contrast, composting only costs \$25 per ton. See how much money Laurel has saved so far in tipping fees on the Composting Dashboard!

**Help Meet the City of Laurel's Sustainability Goals:** As outlined in our [Sustainability Plan](#), the City of Laurel has robust sustainability goals to which we are actively working to achieve. Composting can help you play your part in shaping our sustainable future!

### Did You Know?

Always Plant with Laurel Organic Compost



The compost created from your food scraps can help grow flowers, trees, and food in your own community—**talk about full circle!**

Find out more about LeafGro GOLD, the soil made from your scraps, at [About LeafGro® – Maryland Environmental Service](#).



## Composting Resources and FAQs

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Can items be placed in the beige container without using the compostable bags?**  
Yes, but this is not recommended. Every scrap may not shake out cleanly and your container could become smelly and dirty. Alternatives to using smaller compostable bags include using large paper yard debris bags or [purchasing 35-gallon compostable bags on-line](#).

**Should the cart be locked on pickup day?**  
Yes. The lock is meant to keep critters out of your cart. Our laborers will unlock the cart when they pick up on your designated [pickup day](#).

**Do I have to put my cart out every week?**  
Whatever works best for you! Carts can be put out every week or when they are mostly full. Public Works will stop by every week on your [collection day](#) to check.

**Can dog hair and cat hair go into the composting container?**  
Yes. Never would have guessed that one!

**How do I get more composting bags?**  
Bags for countertop bins can be purchased at the [Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center \(City Hall\)](#) on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays or at the Laurel Farmer's Market on Thursdays (cash-only). [Maryland Environmental Science \(MES\)-approved compostable bags](#) can also be purchased online or from the [local Giant Food grocery store](#). Brown paper shopping bags can be used as an alternative.

### Organics Recycling Campaign

The City has created easy-to-use flyers and handouts to help residents share information about the Organics Recycling Program. Feel free to print copies to keep on your fridge or share with neighbors, community groups, and local events.



English Resources



Spanish Resources

### Informational Videos

Prince George's County Composting Facility Tour 2024



Composting with Our Council: Councilwoman Johnson



# 2023 and 2024 organics tonnage collected

Enter Compost Tonnage Here->	78.46		
<hr/>			
<b>CO2e Calculator</b>		<b>Cost Savings Calculator</b>	<b>Equivalencies Calculator</b>
Input: Total Tons of Compost	78.46	Composting Cost / ton	\$25.00
Total Emissions Reduced (MT CO2e)	36.27	Landfill Costs / ton	\$78.00
<hr/>			
<b>Methane Calculator</b>			
Input: Total Tons of Compost	78.46	Total Cost Savings of Composting	\$4,158.38
Total Emissions Reduced (MT CH4)	1.36		

Enter Compost Tonnage Here->	89.46		
<hr/>			
<b>CO2e Calculator</b>		<b>Cost Savings Calculator</b>	<b>Equivalencies Calculator</b>
Input: Total Tons of Compost	89.46	Composting Cost / ton	\$25.00
Total Emissions Reduced (MT CO2e)	41.36	Landfill Costs / ton	\$78.00
<hr/>			
<b>Methane Calculator</b>			
Input: Total Tons of Compost	89.46	Total Cost Savings of Composting	\$4,741.38
Total Emissions Reduced (MT CH4)	1.55		

In preparation of the mandatory phase starting in July 2025, Public Works crews began delivering carts to neighborhoods in September 2024, completing the rollout in June 2025. Organics collected September 2024 to June 2025 119.96 tons. Prior to rollout September 2023 to June 2024 77.96 tons.

# Next steps:



- ▶ Education/Compliance
- ▶ Increased social media presence via Sustainable Laurel Facebook page
- ▶ Composting Ambassadors
  - ▶ Farmer's Market
  - ▶ City Hall in the Park meetings
  - ▶ Sustainability Action Group activities
- ▶ High school student volunteers