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Residential Curbside Collection System Changes to Green Compost Carts

City Council Committee
G.R.O.W. Pilot Program
March 3, 2026

City and County of Honolulu
Department of Environmental Services
Green Recycling Organic Waste (G.R.O.W.) Program

Submitted by the Department of Environmental Services for INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING on the G.R.O.W. Pilot Program for Mar 3, 2026 @ 01:00 PM EES Meeting.

Jacobs Challenging today. Reinventing tomorrow.

honolulu.gov/opala

DEPT. COM. 121(26) EES

Purpose of Presentation

- To introduce, promote and educate the collection of food scraps and wasted food utilizing the green composting cart
- Provide an overview of the program and provide residents in the pilot areas that are on the automated refuse collection (grey, green and blue carts) with information needed to understand and prepare for the upcoming G.R.O.W. program.
- The materials are focused on the initial pilot program and not the full implementation.

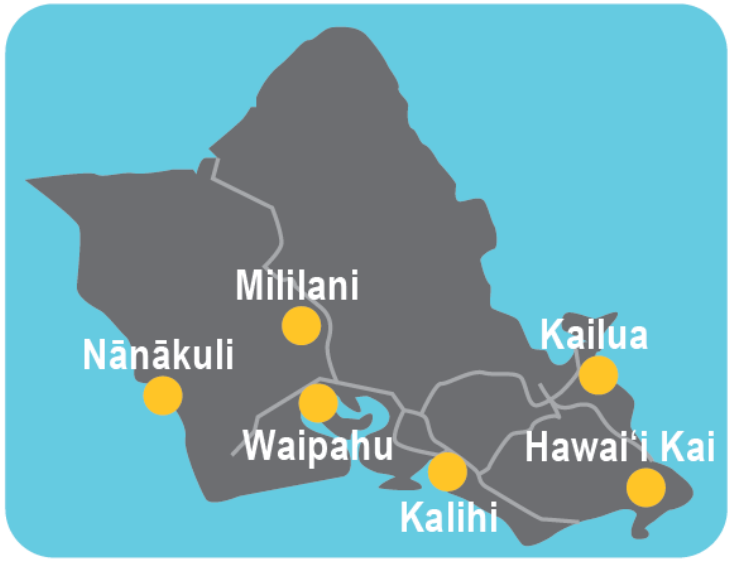


What is changing?

Food scrap and wasted food collection in green compost carts.

For who?

Starting April 1, 2026 with households in Waipahu, Nānākuli, Hawai‘i Kai, Mililani, Kailua, and Kalihi that currently receive City automated curbside collection.







What can go in green compost carts?



INCLUDE THE FOOD!







FOOD SCRAPS AND WASTED FOOD

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dairy products: solids and semi-solids at room temperature (such as cheese and yogurt)
- Bread and baked goods
- Pasta, rice, grains, and cereal
- Beans, nuts, and seeds
- Meat, seafood, poultry, and bones (such as from fish and chicken)
- Eggshells, nutshells, and seafood shells
- Leftovers and spoiled food
- Table scraps and plate scrapings
- Loose coffee grounds and tea leaves/grounds

GREEN WASTE

- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Branches
- Hedge trimmings
- Palm fronds
- Natural Christmas trees



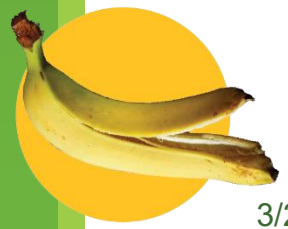
What cannot go in green compost carts?

- Liquids
- Paper and paper products
- Plastic
- Metal
- Glass
- Fats, oils, and greases (FOG)
- Manufactured compostable materials (MCM): products certified and labeled as Compostable and Biodegradable
- Pet waste
- Coffee cups
- Takeout containers and pizza boxes
- Fast food wrappers and packaging
- Corks
- Dirt, rocks, bricks, and plant pots









How will residents participate in food scrap and wasted food curbside collection?



- Collect food scraps and wasted food in the kitchen in a sealed container, such as:
  - Kitchen collection pail
  - Reusable bag or resealable storage bag
  - Repurposed container with a lid (e.g., yogurt tub)
- Consider freezing food scraps until the night before or morning of collection day.
- To minimize odors, sprinkle with baking soda.
- Place food scraps and wasted food, loosely, in your green compost cart.
- Set your cart out on collection day, biweekly. **Collection day will remain the same** and no increase in traffic flow.
- Do NOT add any paper bags, plastic bags or liners to your green compost carts.

To minimize mess, **consider a layer of green waste on the bottom of your green compost cart** to absorb any residual liquid from food scraps and wasted food; then alternate layers of food waste and green waste.



Can residents self drop-off food scraps and wasted food at the composting facility?

- **YES!** All residents can self-drop off food scraps, wasted food, and green waste at Hawaiian Earth Recycling composting facility.
  - **Wahiawā location:** 65-1101 Wilikina Drive, Wahiawā, 96786
- Self-drop off will be free of charge. No commercial vehicles.
- The facility will accept a maximum of two self-drop-off loads per day.
- City transfer stations and convenience centers will still accept green waste but NOT food scraps and wasted food.



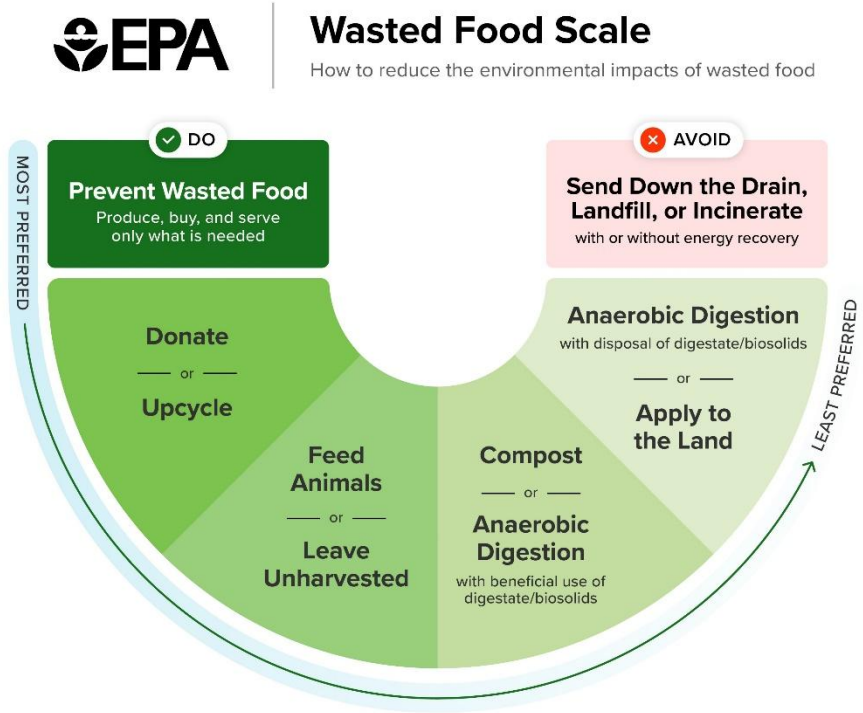
What happens to food scraps and wasted food collected for composting?

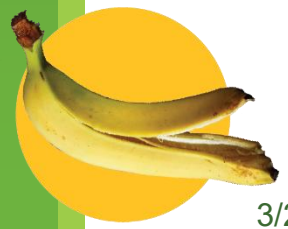
- Hawaiian Earth Recycling composting facility uses specialized composting processes to break down organic matter and is CRB trained by the USDA as a processor of host material.
- Compost is sold to individuals, landscapers, and other agricultural users.
- Learn more at their website: https://hawaiianearth.com/
- City's Recycling will be collecting data (contamination, participation, etc.) once the program starts.



Divert Waste from Landfill

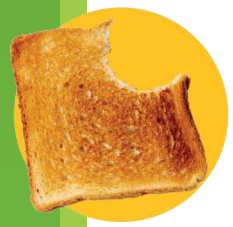
- O‘ahu homes generate about 60,000 tons of residential food waste each year.
- Composting is a more preferred processing option than landfilling.
- Composting also will help the City meet the waste sustainability goal to achieve 95% landfill diversion by 2030.





Education and Outreach

- ENV Refuse webpage
- FAQ document
- Brochure and fact sheets
- **Public workshops**
- Social media posts (Instagram, X, Facebook)



Questions?

Mahalo for your time!



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