



Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) on Fruit & Vegetative Food Waste, Grass Clippings in Approved City A2 COMPOST CARTS

Program Summary

The City of Ann Arbor's compost cart collection program now accepts uncooked fruit and vegetable food waste, such as apple cores, banana peels, corn husks, melon rinds, avocados, salad greens, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, etc. Meat, chicken, fish, dairy, and oils are not to be included in the compost cart program. Residents may place the approved materials into municipally-approved compost carts along with yard debris and grass clippings. Produce waste and/or grass clippings are not accepted in paper yard waste bags to avoid overweight and broken paper bags at the curb and attracting vermin to bagged food waste. The seasonal compost program is provided on the curbside weekly solid waste pickup day, from April through November. More information is posted at www.a2gov.org/compost.

Only city-provided, resident-purchased compost carts are acceptable containers for the expanded compost program. Compost carts are sold and picked up from the city for a one-time cost of \$50 for 32-, 64-, or 96-gallon carts (same price all sizes, payable by cash, check, or credit card) from the city's Customer Service & Payment Center, 220 E. Huron, open weekdays from 8-5, 734.994-7336 (99-GREEN). Compost carts are the property of purchasers, who are responsible for any cart repair or theft. Residents should record and save the serial number of their compost cart as part of tracking their personal property.

Question & Answers

Q1: What can I put into the compostable cart?

A: Please put yard wastes, brush, grass clippings, fruits and vegetable scraps into the compostable cart. *See the attached chart for more specifics.*

Q2: Can I put vegetative food waste or grass clippings in paper yard waste bags outside my compost cart?

A: No. All food waste and grass clippings must go into the cart.

Q3: Can I ever use the compostable cart for trash?

A: No. The compost carts have a special color and imprint to keep them separate from the blue A2 trash carts. The addition of trash and plastic bags to the compost collection program will contaminate the end product.

Q4: How do I place the Compostable cart at the curb for pickups?

A: The same rules apply to the compostable cart as for the A2 carts. Please place the cart at the curb before 7 a.m. on your weekly collection day. Allow at least 3' between the compost cart and the A2 Cart and other obstacles, such as utility poles, trees, vehicles, and recycling bins. This space allows the automated truck arms to grasp the carts without tipping other containers. No solid waste materials may be placed under or within 3' for utility pole guy wires. The cart's serial number should face the street (handle facing the sidewalk). Please keep the lid closed since overflowing carts will spill debris as lifted.

Q5: How do I purchase a compost cart?

A: Compost carts are sold and picked up from the city for a one-time cost of \$50 for 32-, 64-, or 96-gallon carts (same price all sizes, payable by cash, check, or credit card) from the city's Customer Service & Payment Center, 220 E. Huron, open weekdays from 8-5, 734.994-7336 (99-GREEN).

Q6: Why are grass clippings accepted in the compostable cart pilot, even though they were dropped a few years ago from the general compostable collection program?

A: It is still accurate that grass clippings are best "grasscycled" back into the lawn with a mulching mower to save time in bagging the clippings and to provide nitrogen to the turf. Grasscycling is the recommended practice for maintaining lawns at most golf courses, which have a high standard of appearance and maintenance. Grass clippings can also be mixed with brown leaves within a home compost bin. However, some residents would like to have their grass clippings picked up, even just a few times a year. With the automated compost cart removing the biggest difficulty of heavy grass clippings either being overweight in cans or breaking through paper bags, the option is available for city residents to use their compost carts for grass clippings, if desired.

Q7: Right now I put my produce scraps in a plastic bag inside my trash cart. How do I keep my compostable cart clean if I'm adding loose produce, such as wet melon rinds?

A: The cart can be cleaned with soap and hose water. If desired, you may put your produce into a paper bag or wrap in a sheet of newspaper before placing into the compost cart. (Plastic bags are not acceptable in the compost collection program.)

Q8: Do I have to put produce waste in the compostable cart? I put all my food waste down the trash disposal and don't want to bother with another option.

A: You may continue to handle your produce waste as you prefer. Using in-sink garbage disposal units also continues to be a valid choice for disposing of organics in Ann Arbor. The city's municipal Wastewater Treatment Plant efficiently utilizes the addition of food waste (but not grease, fats, or oils) to feed the beneficial microorganisms that remove dissolved solids and phosphorus from the wastewater. This biological process reduces the need to use chemicals for phosphorus removal. Some people use their produce scraps for their home compost bin.

Q9: Is using a Compostable cart for yard waste and produce waste a new idea?

A: The city has run several pilots to test handling fruit and vegetable waste collected in compost carts. Many thanks to our pilot partners, including: the University of Michigan Office of Grounds & Waste Management; several participating restaurants; and the 250-household neighborhood off Miller Road, which tested the use compost carts for yard waste and vegetative food wastes since 2006.

For additional information on the Compost Cart program, please contact (734) 994-2807, recycle@a2gov.org, or www.a2gov.org/compost Thank you!

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