



RECOLOGYSF.com

Recology Sunset Scavenger and Recology Golden Gate, your local recycling companies

RECYCLE
COMPOST

Help California save water — compost

The traditional reasons to participate in San Francisco's curbside compost program are to keep materials out of landfills and to return nutrients, in the form of compost, to local farms and vineyards.

Those nutrients give farmers a viable alternative to using synthetic fertilizers and help farmers grow healthy food that comes back to the city to support our good health.

Here is a third great reason to compost: It helps California, our home state, save water, tremendous amounts of water.

When we apply compost to soil we increase the soil's capacity to withstand drought conditions.

Compost is 50 percent humus by weight. Humus is organic matter that helps soil retain moisture. Humus is a form of carbon; it both attracts and holds water.

When we apply compost to an orchard, farm, or vineyard, we increase the amount of humus in the farm's soil and thereby increase the capacity of the soil to withstand drought conditions.

Farmers like to apply compost because doing so helps their soil and their crops get the full benefit of any rain or irrigation. This is particularly important for orchards, which require a lot of irrigation.



Here is a key statistic: If we increase organic matter by one percent on one acre of land by adding compost and farming environmentally, we can save 16,500 gallons of water per year.

Imagine how much water we could save if every city in California copied San Francisco's compost collection program and sent a lot more compost to local farms.

Knowing that composting is a highly effective way to help California save water, San Franciscans have a whole new motive to participate in Recology's green-bin program.

We are doing a good job of composting scraps and plant cuttings in San Francisco, but we can do much better. What can an individual do on a daily basis to help?

Place all food scraps and plant cuttings in the green bin for curbside collection.

Also, please place all food-soiled paper, things like used paper napkins and towels, in your green bin. Soiled paper has short fibers. Microorganisms in compost like short paper fibers. And soiled paper in a kitchen compost pail or curbside compost bin will absorb moisture, which will help control odor.

San Francisco set the trend when we started an urban compost collection program in 1996 to reduce landfill disposal and turn food scraps into compost. Now we can help our state save great amounts of water by extending our good green habit and composting all of our scraps, plant cuttings, and soiled paper.

What goes in the blue bin?

- Hair plugs
- Red ants
- Plastic cups*

* They come back as 5-gallon plastic buckets.



What goes in the green bin?

- Inflatable shoes
- Speed bumps
- Crab shells*

* Eat crab with white wine and sourdough. Compost the shells.



They say it's hard to move readers from one thing, like a newsletter, to another, like a web page. We say people like to laugh and will follow an item that offers a chuckle.

Check out our tongue-in-cheek recycling quiz to view additional multiple-choice questions and answers. The playful quiz is posted on the home page at RecologySF.com



Recycle old clothes and other textiles

Unwanted or worn out clothes and other textiles, such as fabrics woven from thread or yarn, can be recycled through Recology's RecycleMyJunk program.

Residents can call (415) 330-1300 to schedule a pickup or email us through the "contact us" form on our website, RecycleMyJunk.com.

Our textile recycling program also accepts backpacks, purses, belts, and shoes. Recology will take all textiles, even if torn or ripped, as long as they are dry. When placing textiles by the curb for your scheduled pickup, please bundle them with string or place them in a box or bag clearly labeled "Textiles".

RecycleMyJunk is an appointment-based program and part of the collection services we provide in San Francisco under City oversight. To view program rules go to RecycleMyJunk.com.

Residential customers can now include boxes and bundles of textiles without them counting toward the per-collection item limit. Residential customers can also request "Textile Only" collections at no additional charge.

Recology donates textiles collected through the RecycleMyJunk program to St. Vincent de Paul Society, which sorts and repurposes the materials.

The textile recycling program accepts clothing, backpacks, purses, belts, and shoes.



Nice to know

Saved by recycling workers

A few days before Christmas, Gregory Foster, a sorter working in Recology's construction recycling plant in San Francisco, saw something move inside a green garbage bag on the conveyor belt.

Gregory pulled the emergency stop, jumped up on the line, and rescued a trembling puppy from inside the bag.

The dog was badly injured and bleeding. Another sorter, Arturo Pena, ran and got a bottle of antiseptic and cleaned the puppy's wounds and called Animal Care and Control. Workers there nursed the pup back to health and named her Gem.

They investigated

and believe that someone put the puppy in the bag then threw her in a dumpster at a construction site.

The fact that Gem survived her trip through the recycling plant is amazing. The plant processes wood, metal, and other heavy materials from construction and demolition projects. Gregory was working at the last sorting station when he spotted Gem. He saved her very close to the end of the sorting line, where materials that can't be recycled fall straight down 20 feet and are crushed before being transported to a landfill.

Thanks to the very compassionate people at Animal Care and Control little Gem made a full recovery. She was adopted by Patricia Aleman, a community affairs and government relations specialist at Recology, and is living proof that second chances are beautiful.



Gem

Smell the flowers, taste the wine

On March 24 the cover crops that many vineyards grow between rows of vines using compost made from food scraps collected in San Francisco came to full bloom.

Flowering cover crops are tall and colorful, but farmers plant them for other reasons. These plants fix nitrogen and sequester carbon in topsoil, including carbon they pull from the atmosphere.

Cover cropping is an environmental form of farming that is increasing in Northern California. The combination of planting cover crops and applying compost to help them grow is a highly effective way to increase organic matter in topsoil. That improves soil structure and health, which results in hardier vines, bigger harvests, superior grapes, and, ultimately, better wines.

So here's a toast to San Franciscans for composting and to vineyard managers for farming environmentally. We make a great team.



Cover crops grown with compost made from food scraps collected in San Francisco.

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