

# Edition:Edina



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CITY GOALS:



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Better Together

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## City's First Organics Recycling Coordinator Believes Small Efforts Can Make Big Impact

Program Launching in May Will Divert Food, Paper Waste from Landfills

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

Twila Singh got her undergraduate degree in biological anthropology, determined to be a crime scene investigator like on TV.

"Then I did an internship with the county coroner and found out I didn't have the stomach for it," she says with a laugh.

After serving in the Peace Corps, a master's degree in Public Health and working as an epidemiologist in North Dakota, she became a Hennepin County Environmentalist. That's also when she got a compost bin and began backyard composting.

"My motto has always been that we don't need one person doing sustainable living perfectly. We need a million people doing it imperfectly to make an impact," she said, quoting zero-waste chef and blogger Anne-Marie Bonneau.

As the new Organics Recycling Coordinator for Edina, that's the philosophy she is following.

Black and green organics recycling carts – Edina colors, she points out – will be delivered to all Edina houses in April. Starting in May, Vierkant Disposal will pick up the organics on recycling day. The organics will be turned into compost instead of going to a landfill.

Edina is getting a jump-start on organics recycling, in part to work out the kinks before the Jan. 1, 2022, deadline for larger Hennepin County cities to launch a program. Nine cities have already started their programs and 16 others are in the process, according to Hennepin County.

Why is it important? If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest greenhouse gas emitter, behind only China and the United States, according to the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Eliminating food waste in trash would reduce



those emissions an estimated 25 to 30 percent.

It's also easy. Residents should put all their food scraps and other acceptable items in a compostable bag. Many composters keep a small bucket or old ice cream container lined with a compostable bag under the sink. To dispose of it, close the bag and place it in the organics cart. Using the bags will deter animals from your cart and keep it much cleaner. Bags are available at most grocery and home improvement stores.

The program, approved by the City Council in 2019 and similar to the City's recycling program, is starting with single-family households, duplexes and small multi-family buildings. Households will be charged \$5.50 a month.

**Organics Recycling Coordinator Twila Singh wants to help residents learn how easy it is to recycle food scraps.** Photo by Michael Braun

Part of Singh's job is to answer residents' questions and to monitor any issues that arise. That's another reason to launch the program now.

"We want time to respond to concerns and be flexible," she said. "We need to make this program successful for everyone."

More information on the program will be distributed with carts in April. Learn more at [bit.ly/EdinaOrganics](http://bit.ly/EdinaOrganics). Singh can be reached at 952-826-1657 or [tsingh@EdinaMN.gov](mailto:tsingh@EdinaMN.gov).



**ORGANICS  
SPECIAL  
ISSUE**



## CITY PICKS VIERKANT FOR ORGANICS RECYCLING

Vierkant Disposal, which has been offering organics recycling since 2008, has been chosen through a bid process to provide the service citywide beginning in May. Residences will receive their carts in April. Place the cart on the curb each week on your regular recycling pickup day. Photo by Michael Braun



Fireworks begin at 10 tonight at Rosland Park!



**Get information from the City via text notifications!**

**Text EDINA to 57838**

View all of the City's texting lists at [bit.ly/EdinaTextNotifications](http://bit.ly/EdinaTextNotifications).

## BY THE NUMBERS

# Organics Recycling

More than a quarter of our trash is organic material that can be composted. Recycling organic materials, including food scraps, food-soiled paper and compostable products, is an easy way to reduce your trash and protect the environment!



**35 gallons**

Size of the organics recycling bins for Edina



**220 pounds**

Food wasted per person each year in North America



**25-30 percent**

Greenhouse gas emissions of waste that could be reduced if food waste was properly composted instead of put in the trash

**↑ 41 percent**

Growth in global greenhouse gas emissions since 1990





# Fox Meadow Couple Is Early Adopter of Organics Recycling

## Petersons Divert Kitchen Waste From Landfill



**Eggshells, nutshells and animal bones are some of the things Matthew Peterson keeps in a kitchen pail for organics recycling.**  
Photo by Michael Braun

While this pick-up service is convenient, that is not the only reason that Matthew and Joy make it a priority. "I strongly feel that we have certain obligations as citizens of the world," Matthew explained. Minimizing what we put in our landfills is [a part of] that."

After responsible removal of yard waste became second nature to the Petersons, kitchen organics seemed like the next logical step. For many years, they have contracted with Bloomington-based Vierkant Disposal for this added service.

"It might be impossible to live a completely waste-free life," Matthew said. "However, a lot goes into the garbage that doesn't necessarily need to." Eggshells, nutshells and animal bones are great examples.

"It may not seem like a lot, but if every household in Edina keeps even a pound of food scraps out of garbage heaps each week ... the dividends add up." Benefits include a reduction in landfill greenhouse gas emissions, plus the conversion of even tricky organics like dairy and meat waste into rich, bacteria-free compost.

Given their mindset, the Petersons were understandably elated when the City of Edina recently announced the rollout of a comprehensive organics recycling program.

Vierkant Disposal will oversee the new weekly collections. "They've done a good job for us, all around. There are even weeks when our organics overflow the bin or we have a bag on the side, and that's never been a problem for them."

"I hope that households who haven't sorted kitchen waste previously will take to organics recycling quickly," Matthew said. As a tip for beginners, he encourages people to think twice and make a conscious decision every time they step in front of their kitchen garbage disposal.

*For more information about the City's organics recycling program, visit [bit.ly/EdinaOrganics](http://bit.ly/EdinaOrganics).*

BY DAVID KATZ

Unless you're a horse, a converted stable may not sound like a terribly attractive place to call home. However, a 3,300-square-foot Tudor Revival nestled in the Fox Meadow Neighborhood is sure to make you think twice about that snap assessment. Longtime residents Matthew and Joy Peterson maintain this unique piece of real estate, which boasts a pedigree on par with any thoroughbred horse.

"Our house and acreage were once part of a large, forested estate – one of the largest in Edina," Matthew explained.

Although subdivided and redeveloped into a more conventional residential neighborhood nearly half a century ago, the Petersons' 0.9-acre urban oasis retains its bucolic character. Particularly noteworthy is a beautiful, mature canopy of hardwood trees.

While an asset to be sure, these approximately 100 trees come with a drawback. "We spend a lot of time outdoors to keep the place looking the way it should – and that's not just gardening," Matthew said. "It's not uncommon for me to walk through and collect 100 gallons of sticks in one go." Each year, the Petersons also collect about 500 bags of leaves.

What do they do with all this yard waste? "Much of it goes into our own compost pile. Once it returns to mulch, we use that nutrient-rich material to sustain our trees and shade gardens." In addition, the couple relies on curbside disposal for the proper disposal of yard waste they cannot productively compost at home.

# Organics Recycling Guide

## What is accepted?

### All food

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, fish and bones
- Dairy products
- Eggs and eggshells
- Pasta, beans and rice
- Bread and cereal
- Nuts and shells



### Certified compostable products

- Compostable paper and plastic cups, plates, bowls, utensils and containers.



Look for the term "compostable" or the BPI logo on certified products.



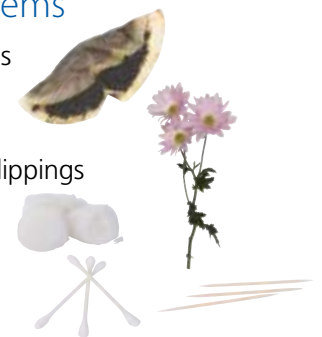
### Food-soiled paper

- Pizza boxes from delivery
- Napkins, paper towels and tissues
- Paper egg cartons



### Other compostable household items

- Coffee grounds and filters
- Facial tissue
- Hair and nail clippings
- Cotton balls and swabs
- Houseplants and flowers
- Wooden items such as chopsticks, popsicle sticks and toothpicks





**7-9 p.m. Monday, April 20**  
**"Just Eat It: A Food Waste Story" Film Screening and Discussion, South View Middle School Auditorium**

We all love food. As a society, we devour countless cooking shows, culinary magazines and foodie blogs. So how could we possibly be throwing nearly 50 percent of it in the trash?

After catching a glimpse of the billions of dollars of good food that is tossed each year in North America, filmmakers Jen and Grant pledge to quit grocery shopping cold turkey and survive only on foods that would otherwise be thrown away. What they find is truly shocking. Brought to you in partnership with the City of Edina's Energy & Environment Commission.

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## Frequently Asked Questions: Organics

### Why is the City starting an organics collection program?

The City of Edina strives to be a leader among municipalities in sustainability.

In response to the State of Minnesota directing the counties in Minnesota to reduce the amount of waste that goes to a landfill, Hennepin County revised an ordinance to require the cities in the county make organic collection available to the residents by Jan. 1, 2022, in cities with a population greater than 10,000.

The Edina City Council approved a curbside residential collection program in July 2019, to go into effect in the spring of 2020.

The organics program was built using the same model as the existing recycling program, where every single-family, double and multi-unit residential household will receive a cart in order to increase participation in the program.

### Where do my organics go?

The organics collected curbside are taken to a commercial facility in Shakopee, Minnesota, and recycled into compost, a nutrient-rich material that is used in landscaping and road construction projects to improve our soil.

### How much does this program cost me?

The monthly price per household is \$5.50. The charge will appear on quarterly utility bills from the City of Edina, beginning in April or May.

### Do other cities in the area have organics recycling programs?

Hennepin County requires all cities in the county have an organics recycling program in place by Jan. 1, 2022. St. Louis Park and Minneapolis already have the program. Bloomington is planning to add organics recycling to its next collection contract.

### What are the benefits of organics recycling?

- **Reduces trash.** Organic materials make up roughly 25 percent of our current waste stream.
- **Reduces greenhouse gas emissions.** As organic materials decompose in landfills, they generate methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Diverting organics to composting helps to reduce landfill methane emissions.
- **Improves soil and protects water.** When added to the soil, it reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides. It also helps the water retention of soils, which reduce runoff and erosion that can pollute our water and helps to conserve water.
- **Supports a local economy.** About 700 jobs are supported by Minnesota's composting industry, which produces \$148 million in gross economic activity per year. The composting industry supports four to eight times more jobs on a per ton basis than landfilling operations.



### How do I get started?

You will receive an organics recycling cart in April. If you already have a Vierkant Disposal organics cart, you will still receive a new cart and your current cart and service will convert to yard-waste only. Organics collection begins May 1.

Collect organics in a BPI-certified compostable bag. These bags can be purchased at retail locations such as Jerry's Do It Best Hardware and Linden Hills Co-op. Remember, only bags labeled "BPI Certified Compostable" that meet ASTM D6400 standards may be used.

People typically line an old ice cream pail or small trash can with the compostable bags to collect food scraps. Once the bag is full, tie it up and place it in your organics cart. Organics carts are picked up weekly on your trash day.

### How often is my organics cart picked up?

Vierkant Disposal will pick up organics recycling every week on your regular recycling day beginning May 1. If your organics cart collection is missed, call Vierkant at 612-922-2505.

