



When cleaning out the fridge, compost old food

In an effort to identify San Francisco's best opportunities to reduce landfill disposal, Recology workers sorted through truckloads of garbage and discovered a problem that is also a key prospect in our city's quest to achieve zero waste: While San Francisco is a recycling leader, we still throw a lot of old food in the trash.

In San Francisco we diligently compost coffee grounds, fruit and vegetable peelings, and yard trimmings in our green compost carts. But what about the old food we encounter when we clean out our refrigerators and kitchen cupboards?

The black cart is for things that cannot be recycled or composted: plastic bags, potato chip bags, and packaging made out of multiple materials, such as paper, plastic, and metal that are glued together.

In examining truckloads of trash collected from black bins, Recology sorters consistently found old food that should be placed in green compost carts: rubbery cheese that is no longer edible, moldy bread in a plastic bag, Chinese takeout, last week's spaghetti, wilted and decaying produce, deli items

Doing the right thing only takes a moment and makes a huge difference.

in plastic tubs, lunch meat in plastic packaging, spoiled salsa, forgotten yogurt, and stale cereal.

As consumers, we may purchase more food than we need or eat only a portion of what we buy and then put the rest in the refrigerator or a cupboard and forget about it. One day we decide to clean out the refrigerator and food cabinet. We pull a kitchen garbage can or paper bag over and throw old food inside. Then,

Turn this...



into this.



~~Landfill.~~ Compost.

Learn more at SFEvironment.org and RecologySF.com.

unfortunately, many people dump the contents in their black trash bins.

We must change this behavior. Composting all of our food is one of the key solutions to meeting our environmental challenges. By composting, we reduce landfill disposal, return nutrients to local farms, and help achieve other environmental benefits.

While some people see moldy cheese or weeks-old leftovers and think, "Ew, it's gross," it's really not so bad. In fact, old foods from the fridge and pantry are among the best things to toss in our green carts. Why? Because these foods are rich in proteins needed to feed microorganisms in compost. More food in green bins equals more microbial activity — more life — in the finished compost.

High-quality compost gives farmers a viable alternative to using synthetic or

chemical fertilizers. More compost on local farms means more healthy food coming back to our farmer's markets, grocery stores, and restaurants. Healthy food helps support the good health of you and your family.

For all those good things to happen, we must take a simple step. When tossing old food, open the packaging, such as the plastic tub, and put the food in your compost collection (green) cart.

Doing the right thing only takes a moment and makes a huge difference. More than one-third of the material in San Francisco trash bins should instead be placed in green bins.


So open those plastic tubs and bags, and dump old food into your green cart. Remember these three words — Compost, not landfill — and be part of the solution.

2014–2015 holiday collection schedule

Collection crews will work on **Thanksgiving Day**, Nov. 27. Thursday customers should put their bins at the curb.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
DEC. 22 Regular pick up for Monday customers	DEC. 23 Regular pick up for Tuesday customers	DEC. 24 Regular pick up for Wednesday customers	DEC. 25 NO PICK UP	DEC. 26 Pick up for Thursday customers	DEC. 27 Pick up for Friday customers
DEC. 29 Regular pick up for Monday customers	DEC. 30 Regular pick up for Tuesday customers	DEC. 31 Regular pick up for Wednesday customers	JAN. 1 NO PICK UP	JAN. 2 Pick up for Thursday customers	JAN. 3 Pick up for Friday customers

 Christmas Tree Collection program runs from Jan. 2-16. Please place clean, unflocked trees at the curb. Remove all tinsel, decorations, plastic bags, stands, and lights. If your tree measures more than 6 feet tall, please cut it in half.



Recycling

Compost

Landfill

AIMING FOR ZERO

What would zero waste look like? San Francisco residents Monica McCrary and Mike Rao and their kids Jared, 13, and Braeden, 10, give us a pretty clear answer to the question.

The family is pictured in front of their discards from one week – 30.4 pounds of material. They

recycled and composted 28.3 pounds and sent just 2.1 pounds to landfill.

Journalists Faith D’Aluisio and Peter Menzel documented eight families and their trash. To see the photo essay, search “What we can learn from pictures of people and their trash.”