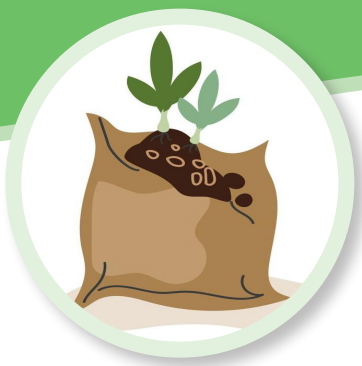
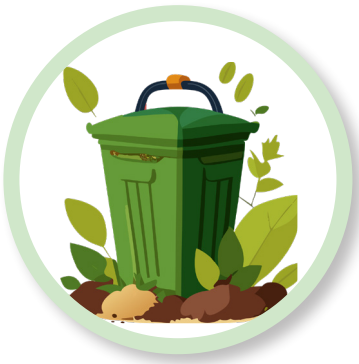
Composting in the RDKS

Learn **why** and **how** we organize our organics!



What is composting?

Composting is the process of turning food scraps, yard waste and other organic materials into nutrient-rich soil. A healthy combination of those organic materials along with heat, oxygen, moisture, and naturally-occurring micro-organisms will create productive soil and reduce the waste sent to our landfills.

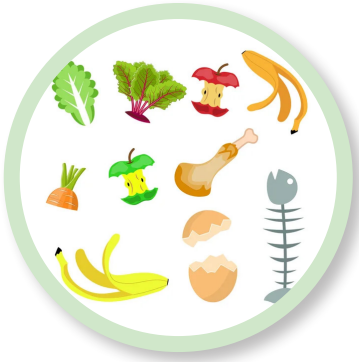


Why do we compost?

By diverting organics from landfills and into the compost stream, we reduce the amount of waste in our landfills which gives them a longer lifetime. Also, during composting, certain compounds are broken down so they don't produce the same amount of contaminants that untreated organics can. Not to mention that the final compost product is useful for a wide range of purposes!

What happens to organics in a landfill?

There's a reason we ask residents to separate out organics: when organics aren't separated and end up in the landfill it can have some serious negative effects. Keep reading...



Regional District of
Kitimat-Stikine

Why we keep organics out of our landfills

Space

When organics are mixed with other waste, they take up more space. This shortens the lifetime of the landfill, and means needing to find the land, time, and money to create a new landfill.

Contamination

Landfills produce *leachate*, or water that has contaminants in it from the waste. Organics produce more leachate than other waste. By reducing the amount of organics in the landfill, we reduce the amount of leachate.

Greenhouse Gases

During the composting process, organics undergo *aerobic decomposition* and release carbon dioxide. Compost undergoes *anaerobic decomposition* in a landfill. This releases methane, a major greenhouse gas (GHG), and it's 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Municipal landfills are responsible for a whopping 23% of Canada's total GHG emissions!

Compost with contaminants

Why are we talking about this now?

After organics are composted, the compost can be used for different purposes depending on the quality. Compost needs to meet standards under the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation (OMRR) to be considered a safe product, either Class A or Class B compost.

Unfortunately, the organics we currently receive from our residents have a high amount of contamination and the resulting compost does not meet either Class A or Class B requirements, and to comply with OMRR we can't remove that material from site. This product is used in the landfilling process as part of how we layer waste.

What's going on at Forceman Ridge?

In August 2023, some of the finished compost material at the Forceman Ridge facility was used as a cushion layer for the base of a new cell (a waste holding unit in a landfill). This cell has a synthetic membrane at the bottom that makes sure leachate goes to the treatment system instead of into the ground. The cushion layer protects the membrane from possible damage due to waste containing construction material.

During the process of placing the cushion layer some loads of unprocessed organics were used by accident. This incident was addressed and incoming organic material is being used correctly.

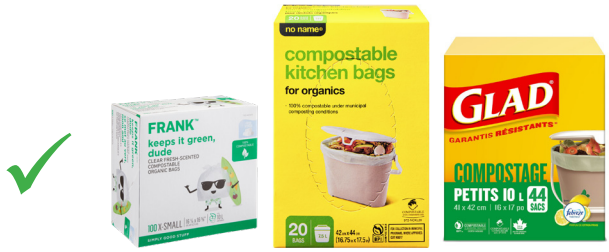
Layering waste in a landfill

How can you help?

We want to start making Class A compost so it can be used outside the landfill. However, the organics that come to our facilities have a high contamination level - we need your help!

Use compostable bags

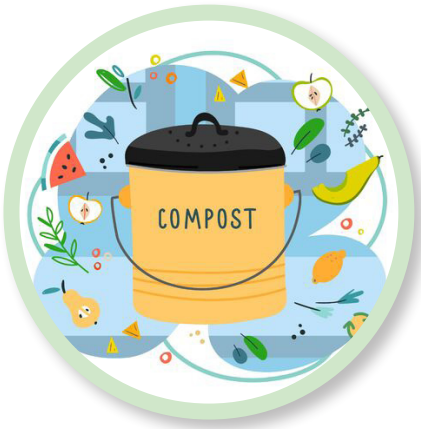
It's important to know that *compostable* and *biodegradable* are not the same thing. Please make sure you use **compostable** bags and **not biodegradable** bags to hold your compost.



Examples of compostable bags

Put plastic in recycling or garbage

We often see non-compostable plastics in organics. Plastic bags, beverage containers and plastic utensils - these all go in your garbage or recycling.



Help us produce high quality compost for our communities and lower the contamination in organics by using **compostable** bags for collection and by keeping other plastics out of your compost bins!

Regional District of **Kitimat-Stikine**

Organics 101:
What goes in the bin?

ACCEPTED

These materials are accepted in your curbside **organics container:**

Food Scraps

- Meat, bones, fish, and seafood shells
- Dairy products, including cheese and yogurt
- Noodles, rice, beans, grains, and bread
- Tissue paper *(no blood or fecal matter)*
- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds, teabags, and filters
- Egg shells
- Small amounts of oil and fat *(soaked in paper towel or newspaper)*

Food-soiled paper products

- Empty cereal boxes *(no plastic liners)*
- Pizza boxes
- Newspaper *(for wrapping food scraps or lining kitchen containers)*
- Paper bags *(for lining kitchen containers, such as Bag-to-Earth)*
- Parchment and wax paper
- Paper napkins
- Used paper dishes *(no plastic coating)*

These materials are accepted in your curbside **organics container** or **kraft bag:**

Yard trimmings

- Leaves and grass clippings
- Weeds, plants, and flowers
- Short branches and prunings *(under 10 cm thick and 50 cm long)*

NOT ACCEPTED

These materials are **NOT** accepted in your curbside **organics container** or **kraft bag** and should be recycled or safely disposed of:

Fecal matter

- Animal waste
- Diapers

Large or heavy items

- Branches or prunings over 10 cm thick and 50 cm long
- Rocks, soil, or sod
- Lumber or other wood products

Plastics

- Biodegradable plastic bags
- Plastic bags, wrap, or containers
- Products made of Polylactic Acid (PLA) *(containers, disposable plates, cutlery)*

The RDKS Solid Waste Department is available to answer any questions regarding organics diversion in the Regional District.

300 - 4545 Lazelle Ave
Terrace, BC V8G 4E1

250-615-6100
1-800-663-3208

info@rdks.bc.ca
rdks.bc.ca

Regional District of
Kitimat-Stikine