



Larchmont-Mamaroneck Joint Garbage Disposal Commission

FAQS ON FOOD SCRAP RECYCLING

Why Recycle Food Scraps?

Food scraps are one of the largest components of garbage sent to landfills and incinerators. However, food scraps (also called food waste) are not trash. They are a resource that can be turned into useful compost or energy.

Recycling food scraps into compost captures their nutrients and energy and returns them to the environment. When food scraps are sent to a landfill or incinerator this resource is lost. In a landfill, food scraps create methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas that traps CO₂ and contributes to global warming. When sent to an incinerator, food scraps reduce the efficiency of the incinerator because they contain water and therefore don't burn well.

Composting food scraps turns that story around! Instead of wasting energy trying to burn food, or creating methane from landfilling it, composting food scraps produces a useful and valuable product that gives back to our nutrient life cycle resulting in cleaner soil, water and air.

What Is Compost?

Compost is a soil amendment which enriches our soil. When purchasing a bag of potting soil or observing your landscaper putting down "dirt" you are using compost.

Compost benefits our landscape by maximizing plant growth, preventing soil erosion and mitigating the frequency of water, fertilizer and pesticide use.

By recycling your food scraps, you are reducing waste and creating compost - a double win!

How can I participate in the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Joint Garbage Disposal Commission's Food Scrap Recycling Program?

You can participate in this program as long as you are a resident of the unincorporated Town of Mamaroneck or Village of Larchmont. This is a drop-off and voluntary program. You are NOT required to have a food scrap "starter kit" to participate as you can bring your food scraps in another receptacle to Maxwell Ave. Recycling Center. (Note the Village of Mamaroneck has its own program too. Click on this [link](#) for details).

Drop-off Location and Hours:

The food scrap recycling drop-off cans are located at the Maxwell Avenue Recycling Center (40 Maxwell Avenue, Larchmont, NY 10538 – next to the entrance to I-95), up the hill and opposite the office – look for the big signage with "Food Scrap Drop-Off Site." Water and a hose to the right of the shed are available to rinse your container out during the warmer weather months.

The Maxwell Avenue drop-off site hours of operation are:

Mondays	8am-3pm
Tuesdays	8am-2pm
Wednesdays	CLOSED
Thursdays	8am-3pm
Fridays	8am-3pm
Saturdays	8am-11:45am
Sundays	CLOSED

Starter Kits & Compostable Bags:

Starter kits can be purchased at the Maxwell Avenue Recycling Center for \$20. A starter kit comprises one 2-gallon countertop pail, one 6-gallon home storage and transportation bin, and one roll of 25 compostable bags for your pail. The different parts of the kit, including additional compostable bags (for both the 2-gallon pail and 6-gallon bin) are also sold separately at the Recycling Center.

Payment can be made by cash or check made payable to "LMJGDC" (acronym for Larchmont-Mamaroneck Joint Garbage Disposal Commission). For details on all items that can be purchased, click on this [link](#).

Home Delivery of Food Scrap Starter Kit during COVID-19

Free, contactless, home delivery of a food scrap starter kit is being offered by volunteers from the Town of Mamaroneck Sustainability Collaborative during COVID-19. Please email a volunteer to order your \$20 food scrap starter kit at foodwastekits@townofmamaroneckny.org.

What do I do once I have a starter kit?

Most residents will fill the countertop pail with food scraps as needed. It is suggested that residents also have a larger bin to TRANSFER food scraps into for weekly storage. This larger six-gallon storage bin can also be used for transportation of food scraps to the Recycling Center. It is recommended that the food storage/transportation bin be kept indoors – either in the house or in the garage and tightly closed.

Then bring your transportation bin to the food scrap drop-off cans at Maxwell Avenue Recycling Center to dispose of your food scraps as often as needed.

Note: See this [brief video-clip on “How to Load Compostable Bag”](#) for the countertop pail from Scarsdale’s Food Scrap Recycling Program.

What items are accepted in the food scrap bins?

- ALL FOOD, including:
 - ✓ Fruits and Vegetables (remove stickers, bands, ties)
 - ✓ Meat and Poultry (bones ok)
 - ✓ Fish and Shellfish (shells ok)
 - ✓ Dairy Products
 - ✓ Bread and Pasta
 - ✓ Rice and Grains
 - ✓ Egg Shells
 - ✓ Chips and Snacks
 - ✓ Nuts and Seeds
 - ✓ Leftover, Spoiled and Expired Food (raw or cooked ok)
 - ✓ Coffee Grounds (paper filters ok)
- Tea Bags (no staples)
- Paper Towels and Napkins
- Cut Flowers and household plant leaves
- Compostable Bags (no plastic bag)

Note: This is more than backyard composting allows for!

What items are not accepted?

Do **not** include the following items which contaminate our food scraps:

- Twist ties or stickers on fruit
- Plastic bags, plastic packaging and wrappers
- Baby/Hand wipes
- Diapers
- Glass, metal or plastic
- Pet waste or kitty litter
- Styrofoam
- Yard waste

Note: For general rules and instructions on disposal of different types of residential waste, visit this [webpage](#). For questions on how to recycle or dispose other items, visit the [Waste Wizard Recyclopeda webpage](#).

Am I required to use compostable bags?

Using a compostable bag is not required. You can either use a compostable bag, a paper bag, or no bag. If you choose to bring your food scraps in plastic bags, please be advised you will need to empty the food scraps into the large food scrap recycling cans and then throw the plastic bag into the designated sanitation/garbage truck.

If you purchase compostable bags elsewhere from Maxwell Avenue Recycling Center, they should be certified compostable by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) – see image below of BPI compostable logo. Any compostable products disposed in the food scrap recycling drop-off needs to be BPI-certified to be accepted in our compost facility.



Can I use plastic bags labeled “biodegradable”?

“Biodegradable” plastic bags are not accepted in the food scrap recycling cans. Compostable bags are made of plant-based materials that break down in the composting process. Plastic bags labeled “biodegradable” are made of plastic that breaks down into small pieces of plastic and will contaminate the compost. Therefore, these “biodegradable” plastic bags must also be thrown into the designated sanitation/garbage truck.

Will composting be messy or smelly?

Collecting food scraps should not be any more messy or smelly than putting food scraps in your trash. The same materials are being collected – just in a different container. Using compostable bags with your pail will also keep everything cleaner. Remember to try to keep your container closed tightly, and in the warmer and more humid weather, you may need to empty the container more frequently.

Where will the food scraps end up?

All material collected will be brought to a composting facility, currently the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) in Kingston, NY, where it will be turned into compost. The compost is then sold in bulk to landscapers and garden centers. For more details on UCRRA’s composting program, visit this [webpage](#).

Where does Westchester County’s trash go?

In Westchester, 2,250 tons of municipal solid waste are burned at the county’s incinerator in Peekskill each day. Discarded food makes up almost 22 percent of waste in landfills and incinerators, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

(Source: <https://www.wtienergy.com/plant-locations/energy-from-waste/wheelabrator-westchester>)

When did our residential, drop-off food scrap recycling program begin and where else are there such programs nearby?

Our program began on September 18, 2017. In January 2017, the Village of Scarsdale launched their voluntary, drop-off, food scrap recycling program, which our program is modeled after. As of mid-March 2021, 25 municipalities in Westchester County have food scrap recycling programs in place.

Are there any cities in the U.S. that have food scrap recycling programs?

Yes. New York City’s residential organics collection program is the largest in the country. New York City temporarily suspended curbside composting service beginning Monday, May 4, 2020 until further notice due to COVID-19. Smaller cities around the country like Portland (OR), San Francisco, and Seattle have mandatory programs.

What else is our community doing to reduce wasted food?

In fall 2019, our tri-municipal community of Town of Mamaroneck, Village of Larchmont, and Village of Mamaroneck together with the Mamaroneck Union Free School District launched [Love Your Food](#), a community-based education campaign. This is substantially funded by a three-year grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) designed to promote the importance of reducing wasted food in order to sustain our communities, provide food for people in need, conserve resources and have a positive impact on climate change. This initiative aims to inspire all residents – including students – to reduce the amount of food we waste, share the excess to provide food for those in need, and to compost whatever scraps are left. To learn more, visit <https://www.loveyourfoodny.org>.

Where has our food scrap recycling program been featured?

Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch, November 14, 2019 article on "Larchmont, Mamaroneck Receive Grant to Reduce Food Waste": <https://patch.com/new-york/larchmont/larchmont-mamaroneck-receive-grant-reduce-food-waste>

TheLoop, November 14, 2019 article on "Coming Up: Larchmont-Mamaroneck 'Love Your Food' Campaign Kicks Off Nov. 16": <https://larchmontloop.com/coming-up-larchmont-mamaroneck-love-your-food-campaign-kicks-off-nov-16/>

Soundview Rising, May 3, 2019 article on "Free Compost Give-Back for Mamaroneck-Larchmont Residents": http://www.risingmediagroup.com/images/web%20pdfs/2019/5-3soundview_rising.pdf (page 2)

Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch, January 21, 2019 article on "Moving Towards Zero Waste": https://patch.com/new-york/larchmont/moving-towards-zero-waste?utm_term=article-slot-1&utm_source=newsletter-daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter

Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch, September 6, 2018 article on "1st Anniversary for Mamaroneck, Larchmont Recycling, Composting": <https://patch.com/new-york/larchmont/1st-anniversary-mamaroneck-larchmont-recycling-composting>

LMC-TV, The Local Live, June 28, 2018 footage on "Mamaroneck Town and Larchmont Win Eco Award for Composting": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8-SA1Bhe5s&app=desktop>

The Loop, June 26, 2018 article on "Eco Award for Town of Mamaroneck and Village of Larchmont": <https://larchmontloop.com/eco-award-for-town-of-mamaroneck-and-village-of-larchmont/>

Larchmont Ledger, June 2018 article on Free Compost "Give Back": <http://www.larchmontledger.com/LL0618.pdf> (page 11)

Larchmont Ledger, April 2018 article on "Trash to Treasure": <http://larchmontledger.com/LL0418.pdf> (page 2)

Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch, March 16, 2018 article on "Mamaroneck, Larchmont Celebrate 6 Months of Food Waste Recycling": <https://patch.com/new-york/larchmont/mamaroneck-larchmont-celebrate-6-months-food-waste-recycling>

Journal News article and video clip, Aug. 29, 2017 on “Composting Programs Spreading through Sound Shore”:

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/westchester/2017/08/29/composting-programs-spreading-through-sound-shore/576709001/>

QUESTIONS?

Email Information@LMSanitation.org or the Sustainability Coordinator at sodierna@townofmamaroneckny.org.