

Don't Waste Uneaten Food— *Compost It!*

Food scraps have value.

Food is the single largest category of material sent to municipal solid waste landfills. In 2018, 35 million tons of food scraps went into landfills. Food in landfills generates methane, a harmful greenhouse gas. You can help the environment by recycling your food waste into compost.



1 What is compost?

- Compost is decomposed organic material made from food, leaves, and other material.
- It is a living soil amendment.

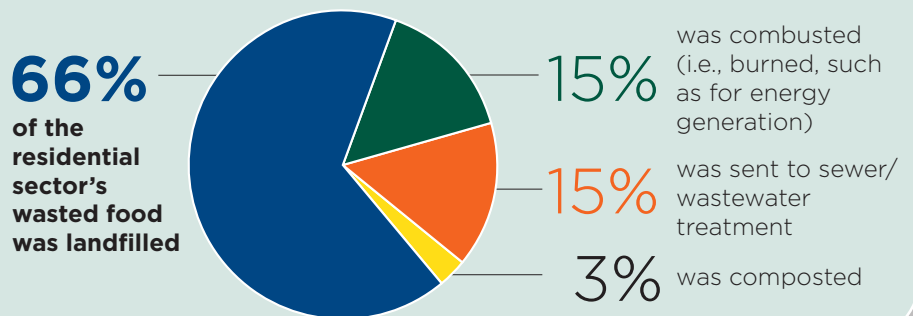
2 Why compost?

- Keep food out of landfills.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Use finished compost in a garden to recycle nutrients back into the soil.
- Improve soil health.
- Expand the soil's ability to store carbon.
- Reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides.

According to the EPA, in **2018**, only 2.6 million tons of food scraps were composted, compared to 35 million tons that went into landfills.



The **residential sector**, which includes single- and multi-family dwellings, generated about **25 million tons** of wasted food in 2018.



3 How can I compost?

- Start backyard composting.
- Begin an indoor worm (vermicomposting) bin.
- Drop off food scraps at a community compost location.
- Sign up for a food scrap curbside collection service, or participate in one your city or town might offer.

4 What can I compost?

- The basic ingredients for compost are greens (e.g., vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds, grass), browns (leaves, twigs, straw, or other carbon-rich material), water, and air.
- Your community or compost service may accept additional items, so check with them.

I am interested in composting; how do I learn more?

Visit EPA's composting webpage:

- <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reducing-impact-wasted-food-feeding-soil-and-composting>

SOURCE: <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/food-material-specific-data>



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Learn more about how to reduce food loss and waste at www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste and www.epa.gov/reducefoodwaste