



## ORGANIC RECYCLING SOLUTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE COLORADO



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### A Message from A1 Organics, Colorado's Leading Organics Recycler

**Effective April 1, 2023, accepted materials in residential and commercial compost collection will be limited to:**

- **ONLY food scraps**
- **ONLY yard / plant trimmings**
- **ONLY 3 gallon certified (CMA Approved) compostable bags used to collect food scraps**

Why are we eliminating compostable packaging and other paper materials from the food scraps and yard trimmings we compost?

Every year, 90% of the material A1 Organics recycles, represents hundreds of thousands of tons of high-quality compost product, which is uncontaminated and used as a natural nutrient-rich amendment by farmers, nurseries, landscaping businesses, and home gardens. The quality compost products that we create develop healthier and more resilient soil, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, recycle nutrients, conserve water, and reduce the use of synthetic fertilizers.

As the demand for quality compost increases and more communities understand the value of keeping organic materials out of our landfills, compost manufacturers are making changes throughout the country, including A1 Organics, to address contamination in the residential and commercial organics recycling streams.

Compost haulers and municipalities all along the Colorado Front Range are working with A1 Organics to create a high-quality compost product free from trash. Our goal is to keep food scraps and yard trimmings out of the landfill to prevent harmful methane emissions while creating a valuable soil amendment that will help Colorado farms and landscapes build healthy soils that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, reduce water and chemical use, and grow nutritious foods.

A1 Organics continues to make high-quality compost with the 90% of material which is not impacted by food related packaging or contamination. The finished compost offered for sale meets our high

standards for quality and consistency. Nevertheless, as food scrap collection increases, a growing percentage (currently at 10%) of material coming to A1 Organics is too contaminated to process effectively and meet the quality standards for finished compost. A1 Organics is reducing the accepted material list as the first step in eliminating contamination.

**Here are the reasons we will NO LONGER accept compostable packaging and service ware as well as non-traditional compostables (paper towels, napkins, shredded paper, greasy pizza boxes, etc.):**

**Contamination challenge:** Currently when residential and commercial collection programs accept compostable products, non-compostable look-alike items inevitably end up in the mix. It takes time and labor to remove this material. If not removed, the plastic, glass, and non-organic material make it impossible to create a high-quality finished product. A1 believes contamination must be removed at the beginning, not at the end. Contamination significantly increases our operating costs, which makes the compost industry less economically viable.

**Contamination impacts resale quality:** A1 Organics recognizes that their customers will not purchase a product which is contaminated with fragments of packaging, service ware, plastics, and small pieces of glass. Therefore, loads with these contaminants are not utilized as finished compost and this negates the environmental benefits of collecting organics separately from the trash.

**Accepting these materials results in disposal of a significant number of high-quality organics:**

When contamination is present in a mixed load, it requires us to reject the entire load. The result is a large volume of quality organics going to disposal because a small volume of contamination, which cannot currently be removed, is present in the load.

**In some cases, the benefits of recycling clean paper products surpass those of composting:**

Some items, like paper bags and clean corrugated cardboard, can be either composted or recycled. Generally speaking, the recycling of materials back into new products or packaging can provide greater overall environmental benefits than composting does. ***PLEASE NOTE: Compostable packaging CANNOT be placed in the single use recycling stream.***

**Compostables have their place:** Separating them from the mixed stream will allow effective processing or treatment alternatives. Compostable packaging and food service ware were created to assist in the diversion of food waste and as a replacement for single-use plastic. While a single-use compostable bag for containing only food can be effective, creating infrastructure to separate compostables from the organics stream before the composting process is a solution. Doing so will allow the effective processing of both existing and future compostables. Having a separate process for treating compostable products apart from food scraps and yard / plant trimmings will allow those products to stay out of the landfill and realize the environmental benefits they offer.

**Contamination is the number one challenge our industry faces in the residential and commercial organics recycling streams:** A1 Organics believes a paradigm shift is needed in the collection and processing of these organics to move Colorado in the right direction towards achieving increased organics diversion and clean finished compost. We need adequate policy, infrastructure, and educational systems in place to identify, sort, and treat compostable products and packaging. As we continue to work on these solutions as a community, simplifying what we accept supports our goal to keep food scraps and yard & plant trimmings out of the landfill to prevent harmful methane emissions while creating marketable compost. This soil amendment will help Colorado farms and landscapes build healthy soils that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, reduce water and chemical use, and grow nutritious foods.

Please help us protect the environment and create high quality compost by keeping the organics recycling stream clean. [#keepthestreamclean](#)

Thank you,

A1 Organics