

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE



# ZERO WASTE

## News

A publication for County of Santa Cruz GreenWaste Recovery  
Single-Family Customers | Summer 2023

### The COST of WASTE

Page 2





# *The* **COST** *of* **WASTE**

Waste disposal is expensive. Not only do we pay for the cost of our waste service, but we also pay for most of the things we throw out -- either as products or packaging. On average, County residents throw out 4.1 pounds of waste per person per day. This amount includes organic waste and recyclable materials that are placed in the trash cart and end up in the landfill instead of being source separated and converted to new products.

## **Besides waste hauling costs, other landfill costs include:**

- Staff to run the landfill and maintain heavy equipment;
- Landfill infrastructure, construction, and ongoing maintenance;
- Compliance with State and Federal solid waste requirements;
- Environmental compliance, sampling and reporting;
- Waste transfer costs within and outside of Santa Cruz County;
- Collection, packing, shipping, and reprocessing household hazardous waste;
- Implementing education programs that change behaviors to reduce waste:
  - Organics composting programs to reduce waste and sequester carbon in the soil;
  - Ongoing recycling training as local acceptance policies change;
  - Waste reduction strategies to eliminate waste and support a circular economy.

Reducing waste is the key to reducing waste disposal costs. Read on for more ways to reduce waste disposal costs and help save the planet in the process!



# What Can You Do to Reduce Your Waste Disposal Costs?

Do you know that 40% of waste sent to landfills is materials that could be recycled, composted, or reused? Not only is it against environmental laws to put reusable materials in the trash, but it also costs you money.

The best way to save money is to divert recyclable, compostable, and reusable materials from the trash. Proper source separation will reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills and increase the amount of recyclables and organics recovered for reuse. Making less trash saves resources and saves you money!

Once you notice a regular reduction in the amount of trash you produce, call GreenWaste Customer Service at (831) 426-2711 to reduce the size of your trash cart.

In addition to saving money, there are other benefits to reducing your trash. These include: saving space in the landfill, increasing the recyclable materials available for reuse, increasing the availability of compost for carbon sequestration, and reducing the production of greenhouse gases from garbage decomposing in the landfill. When it comes to reducing your trash, saving money also saves the planet!



## Trash Reduction Made Easy: Set Up Work-Central Waste Sorting Stations

Because you have three carts outside, why not have three containers inside too. The kitchen is a great place for a three-container waste sorting station. At home, try under the sink or just next to your counter.

When the trash or recycle bins fill up, they get emptied into their carts outside. Trash should be less than recycling. Food scraps go out the night before pick-up.



## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Take our survey:  
<https://forms.gle/eFqT6rya1hxZ9zja6>



## Other Ways to Reduce Your Waste

- **Reduce the things you buy.** If you don't bring it home, you never need to throw it out.
- **Sell Items you no longer use.** Your kids grow out of their clothes, you finish reading a book, you buy a new car, or you decide to redecorate. Offer unwanted items for sale locally, hold a rummage sale, consign them locally, post them online, or offer them for free to neighbors on a site like nextdoor.
- **Donate clean reusable items.** It only takes a few minutes to organize a donation that can make a big impact for your charity of choice, and on local reuse of quality goods. If you wait, the items may get wet or dirty and then become trash. Act now!
- **Buy quality items second hand.** Gently used items cost less and come without packaging. Designer clothing, solid wood furniture, cast iron pots and pans, heirloom linens, and original artwork can be more affordable when purchased pre-owned.
- **Give green gifts.** Most of us don't need more things in our lives. Consider giving certificates for experiences, such as a shared meal, a long walk at the beach, or a homemade dessert.
- **Use and reuse the things you already have.** Take your reusable bags when you go shopping. Keep reusable containers in your car for leftovers when you go out to eat. Bring your reusable cup when going for coffee or a drink at the soda fountain.
- **Don't buy disposable or single-use items.** Replace disposable/single-use items with reusables. Examples: use cloth towels, sponges, or rags for cleanup instead of single-use paper towels. Use real plates, cups, and cutlery and skip the paper and plastic ones.
- **Consider the packaging.** Whenever possible buy food in good glass jars. Then reuse those same jars when storing food, making homemade holiday gifts, or as rustic glasses when guests show up unexpectedly.
- **Use your food scraps.** Your green bin isn't the only place for food scraps! Did you know that vegetable peels, carrot tops, cores, stems, and bones make great stock for rice, soups, and other dishes? Do your neighbors raise chickens or other animals and want your fresh food scraps for feed? Have you ever thought about composting?



## Together we can do better!



## HHW REMINDER

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facilities are **FREE OF CHARGE** for residential customers. We are very fortunate to have many opportunities to safely dispose of HHW in our County. Please check your local listings to find your most convenient facility for drop-off.





# ABOUT THE BAG

Santa Cruz County has been combining food and yard waste in our green organics cart for almost two years. We understand the frequently asked questions that County residents have about the use of compost liners and food scrap collection bags.



### Can I put compostable bags in my green residential organics cart?

No. Although compostable bags seem like a great way to keep your countertop bucket clean and to transport food scraps to your compost pile or green cart, the bags don't break down like food. They take longer to decompose and often shred, leaving a plastic-like fiber behind. If you must use a bag, leave it in your countertop bucket when you dump the food out.



### What should I do to keep my countertop bucket clean if I can't use bags?

You can still use compostable bags, just don't throw them in the green bin when you dump your food scraps. The real solution, to save money and keep your countertop bucket clean, is to skip the bag and wash the bucket with soap and water after you empty your food scraps. Depending on the bucket, you can wash it the same way you wash your dishes, either by hand or in the dishwasher.



### How do I keep my green curbside organics cart clean if I can't use bags?

The best way to keep your green curbside organics cart clean without the use of bags is to layer in yardwaste before putting in food scraps. If you don't have yard waste, don't worry, all of the other steps will help keep your green organics cart clean. Adding baking powder helps, too!

We are working toward being able to process more materials in our residential organics program in the future.

**Stay tuned!**





**County of Santa Cruz  
Community Development and Infrastructure**

701 Ocean Street, Room 410  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-2160

Presort Standard  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Complete Mailing  
Service, Inc.

# PITCH IN FOR SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Trash Talkers recently launched a website, [pitchinsantacruz.org](http://pitchinsantacruz.org), where residents, visitors, businesses, and schools can get involved, as well as learn more about recent Trash Talkers' achievements. Pitch in to help keep Santa Cruz County clean!



Printed on 55% recycled 30% post-consumer waste paper processed chlorine-free, using soy-based inks.

## RECYCLING RESOURCES



**Recycle Information Line** ..... 831-454-2333

- What and where to recycle (recorded messages)

**Curbside Refuse, Recycling and Yard Waste Collection** ..... 800-665-2209

(operated by GreenWaste Recovery)  
[www.greenwaste.com/santa-cruz-county](http://www.greenwaste.com/santa-cruz-county)

- Begin new service
- Report missed recycling or trash service
- Request delivery or removal of carts
- Obtain oil recycling jugs



**County Community Development & Infrastructure**. 831-454-2160  
[www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org](http://www.santacruzcountyrecycles.org)

- Apartments and business recycling inquiries
  - Complaints, compliments or suggestions
  - Report roadside trash ..... 831-477-3999
- Download and use the "My Santa Cruz County" free mobile app

**Household Hazardous Waste** ..... 831-454-2606  
(recorded messages)

- Schedule for free disposal
- Non-hazardous alternatives

**Contact Zero Waste Outreach Team** ..... 831 454-2160  
or [ZeroWaste@santacruzcounty.us](mailto:ZeroWaste@santacruzcounty.us)

- Questions
- Volunteer as a Zero Waste champion



**Composting Resources** ..... [www.compostsantacruzcounty.org](http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org)

**Buena Vista Landfill & Recycling Center** ..... 831-454-5153

- Recorded information ..... 831-454-2430
- 1231 Buena Vista Drive, Watsonville 95076  
Open: Mon-Tues, Thurs-Sat 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM;  
Wed 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM  
HHW Facility - Open: Wed 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM;  
Fri and Sat 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM

**Ben Lomond Transfer Station & Recycling Center** ..... 831-336-3951

- Recorded information ..... 831-454-2430
- 9835 Newell Creek Road, Ben Lomond 95005  
Open: Mon-Tues, Thurs-Sat 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM;  
Wed 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM  
HHW Facility - Open Thursdays 7:30-3:30

**California Grey Bears Recycling Centers** ..... 831-479-1055 ext. 235

Mid County, 2710 Chanticleer Avenue, Santa Cruz 95065  
Open: 7:30-3:45 daily

Buena Vista Landfill -  
Open: Mon-Tues, Thurs-Sat 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM;  
Wed 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Ben Lomond Transfer Station -  
Open: Mon-Tues, Thurs-Sat 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM;  
Wed 7:30 AM to 2:30 PM

**City of Santa Cruz Resource Recovery Facility & Recycling Center** ..... 831-420-6270

- Open to unincorporated county residents in Davenport and Bonny Doon only
- 605 Dimeo Lane, Santa Cruz 95060  
Open: Mon-Sat 7:30-3:30  
HHW Facility - Open: Saturdays 7:30-3:30



Para información en español sobre el reciclaje en las áreas no incorporadas del condado de Santa Cruz, favor de llamar al (800) 665-2209.