Curbside Compost Club

What Goes In Your Cart

The complete guide to accepted and not-accepted items for your curbside compost service.

IMPORTANT: Your Curbside material eventually ends up at local farms to be used as organic fertilizer — not to an industrial composting facility. That means we have tighter restrictions than our Drop-off Club. No compostable serveware, bioplastics, or BPI-certified plates/utensils are accepted in Curbside carts. When in doubt, leave it out.

✅ YES — Put These In Your Cart

KITCHEN & FOOD SCRAPS

All food is accepted — cooked or raw, fresh or spoiled. Meat and dairy included.

Fruits & vegetables	*Whole, peels, rinds, cores, pits — all of it*
Meat & fish	*Cooked or raw, including bones*
Dairy products	*Cheese, yogurt, butter, sour cream, etc.*
Eggs & eggshells	
Bread, pasta, rice & grains	*Cooked or uncooked*
Baked goods & snacks	*Cookies, chips, crackers, cereal, candy*
Nuts, seeds & shells	*Including peanut shells, sunflower shells, etc.*
Cooled cooking oils & grease	*Small amounts associated with home use is fine. Hot grease could melt your can.*
Sauces, condiments & dressings	*Scrape out of containers; no glass or plastic containers*
Spices & herbs	*Fresh or dried*
Baby food & leftovers	*Scrape from containers*
Consumable liquids	*Juice, smoothies, expired beverages or cooled soup or broth.*
Jams, jellies & preserves	*Scrape from jars*

COFFEE, TEA & BEVERAGES

Coffee grounds	*Loose or still in filter*
Coffee filters	*100% paper filters only*
Tea bags	*Only natural fiber bags (no nylon/silk mesh — see note)*
Tea leaves	*Loose leaf is always fine*
Wine, beer & spirits	*Liquid only — pour into cart or soak into paper/cardboard*
Hops & brewery waste	*If you homebrew*

Non-synthetic wine corks	*Natural cork only — no plastic or composite corks*

⚠ *Many tea bags contain polypropylene plastic to seal the edges. Brands like Twinings, Yorkshire Tea, and most pyramid-style bags use plastic. If unsure, tear open the bag and compost just the leaves.*

YARD WASTE (UNLIMITED — YEAR-ROUND)

One of the biggest perks of Curbside: unlimited yard waste, every week, no bag tags needed. If it doesn't fit in your Hillside cart, bag it in brown paper yard waste bags (no more than 40-pounds each) and set it at the curb alongside your cart.

Grass clippings	
Leaves	*Whole or shredded*
Weeds	*Including roots and soil clumps*
Garden plants & dead plants	*Annual flowers, vegetable plants, etc.*
Flower petals, stems & arrangements	*Remove any wire, foam, ribbon, or plastic first*
Small branches & twigs	*Under 1/2 inch diameter*
Pine needles & cones	
Straw & hay	*Not treated with persistent herbicides*
Potting soil	
Sod & turf	*Small amounts*
Natural wreaths & garlands	*Remove any wire, lights, or synthetic ribbon*
Natural potpourri	*No synthetic fragrance beads*
Evergreen garlands	*Remove lights and wire*
Pumpkins & gourds	*Whole or smashed — remove candles and paint*
Christmas trees	*Cut into sections; remove all decorations, tinsel, and stand*

⚠ *Bulky yard waste (tree limbs, large brush piles) should be dropped off at Soil Dynamics Downtown Yard — free for Compost Club members. See soil-dynamics.com/contact-and-locations#downtown-omaha-yard for hours and location.*

PETS & ANIMALS

Dog & cat waste	*Must be in BPI-certified compostable bags or non-waxed brown paper bags*
Bird droppings & cage liner	*Paper cage liners only — no plastic*
Pet fur & hair	*From brushing or grooming*
Pet nail clippings	
Feathers	
Pet food	*Dry or wet — kibble, canned (no cans), treats*
Animal feed pellets	
Fish food flakes	

Rawhide dog chews	
Aquarium plants	*Freshwater only — no saltwater or synthetic plants*
Small animal bedding	*Paper, hay, or wood-based only — no clay or synthetic litter*

CAT LITTER (SPECIFIC TYPES ONLY)

Only plant-based and paper-based litters are accepted. Traditional clay and crystal litters are NOT compostable.

Paper-based litter	*e.g., Yesterday's News, Ökocat*
Wood-based litter	*e.g., Feline Pine, wood pellets*
Corn-based litter	*e.g., World's Best Cat Litter*
Wheat-based litter	*e.g., sWheat Scoop*
Walnut shell litter	*e.g., Naturally Fresh*
Grass-based litter	*e.g., SmartCat*

⚠ *NOT accepted: clay litter, sodium bentonite litter, crystal/silica gel litter, or any litter with synthetic fragrance beads. When in doubt, check the ingredient list on the bag.*

NATURAL FIBERS & MATERIALS

100% natural-fiber items — with no synthetic blends, dyes, or chemical treatments — are accepted.

Cotton	*100% cotton rags, cotton balls, cotton swabs with paper sticks*
Wool	*100% wool scraps — no synthetic blends*
Linen	*100% linen scraps*
Burlap & jute	*Sacks, twine, garden fabric*
Leather	*Small scraps of untreated, undyed leather only*
Sawdust & wood shavings	*From untreated, unpainted, non-pressure-treated wood only*
Wood ash	*Small amounts from untreated firewood — no charcoal or lighter fluid residue*
Dryer lint	*ONLY if your household washes 100% natural fiber clothing (cotton, wool, linen). Most households have synthetic fabrics — if unsure, trash it.*
Human hair & nail clippings	
Natural rope & twine	*Cotton, jute, hemp, or sisal — no nylon or poly*
Corks	*Natural cork only — not synthetic*

GARDEN AMENDMENTS & SOIL PRODUCTS

If you garden, these common amendments are compostable. Expired or leftover product can go in your cart.

Blood meal	
Fish meal	
Bone meal	
Hoof & horn meal	
Kelp & seaweed meal	
Molasses	*Used as soil amendment or leftover*
Elmer's Glue (or similar PVA glue)	*Water-soluble, non-toxic — small amounts*

HOUSEHOLD MISCELLANEOUS

Wooden chopsticks & skewers	*Untreated wood*
Wooden toothpicks	
Wooden stir sticks	
Matches	*Paper or wood — let cool first*
Cotton swabs	*Only with paper sticks — not plastic*
Natural loofahs & sponges	
Pencil shavings	

❌ NO — Do NOT Put These In Your Cart

COMPOSTABLE SERVEWARE & BIOPLASTICS (NOT ACCEPTED IN CURBSIDE)

Even if it says "compostable" or "BPI Certified" on the label, these items are NOT accepted in your Curbside cart. They require an industrial composting facility to break down. Your Curbside material goes to local farms, where these items won't decompose and will look like trash.

These items ARE accepted in the Drop-off Compost Club — just not Curbside.

Compostable plates & bowls	*Even if labeled BPI Certified*
Compostable cups & lids	*Including PLA-lined hot cups*
Compostable utensils (forks, knives, spoons)	*Even plant-based or CPLA*
Compostable clamshell containers	*Takeout containers, hinged lids*
Compostable straws	*PLA/bioplastic straws are not accepted*
Compostable food trays & fiber trays	
Compostable coffee pods	*Even BPI-certified pods — empty the grounds into your cart instead*
Compostable produce bags	*The thin bags from the grocery store produce aisle*
PLA-lined paper cups	*The kind from coffee shops — has a plastic feel inside*
Compostable mailers & packaging	*Noissue, HeroPackaging, etc.*
Compostable trash bags	*Exception: BPI-certified bags used to LINE your kitchen container or hold dog waste ARE accepted*

PAPER & CARDBOARD (NOT ACCEPTED IN CURBSIDE)

Even though paper and cardboard are technically compostable, we don't accept them in the Curbside service. Your material ends up on local farms. Paper and cardboard blowing across a field looks like trash to a neighbor driving by — and that's not a good look for the farmers we partner with, or for composting in general. Recycle clean paper and cardboard. Trash the rest.

Paper towels & napkins	
Paper plates	*Even non-coated, non-glossy*
Newspaper	*Recycle this instead*
Cardboard (soiled or clean)	*Recycle clean cardboard; trash heavily soiled cardboard*
Pizza boxes	*Our local recycling facilities accept these*
Paper bags	
Paper egg cartons	
Shredded documents	
Cardboard tubes	*Paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls — recycle these*
Non-glossy junk mail	*Recycle this instead*
Tissues & facial tissues	
Paper cupcake/muffin liners	
Parchment paper	
Wax paper	
Paper wine/liquor bags	

PLASTICS, SYNTHETICS & NON-ORGANIC MATERIALS

Plastic bags (any kind)	*Including "degradable" or "oxo-degradable" bags*
Plastic wrap, film & cling wrap	
Styrofoam	*Cups, plates, takeout containers, packing peanuts*
Rubber bands	*Synthetic rubber — not compostable*
Synthetic fabrics	*Polyester, nylon, acrylic, spandex, microfiber cloths*
Synthetic sponges	*Kitchen sponges, scrub pads, magic erasers*
Foil & foil-lined packaging	*Chip bags, juice pouches, candy wrappers*
Silica gel packets	
Twist ties & bread clips	
Stickers & produce stickers	*PLU stickers on fruit are fine in tiny quantities*
Gum	*Most gum contains a plastic polymer base*
Cigarette butts & filters	*Contain plastic fibers*
Synthetic candle wax	*Paraffin candles are petroleum-based*
Latex balloons	*Despite "biodegradable" marketing, latex balloons don't break down — even in industrial compost*

TREATED, COATED & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	
Pressure-treated or painted wood	*Contains arsenic, copper, or other preservatives*
Glossy/coated cardboard or paper	*Shiny = plastic coating*
Waxed cardboard (with paraffin coating)	*Some produce boxes — if the coating flakes like wax, it's OK; if it's smooth/shiny, it's plastic*
Fast-food packaging with a shiny lining	*Burger wrappers, fry containers with a slick feel*
Paper with a matte plastic finish	*If it doesn't tear like paper, it's coated*
Receipts (thermal paper)	*Contain BPA/BPS chemicals*
Dryer sheets	*Coated with synthetic chemicals*
Vacuum cleaner bags & contents	*Contain synthetic dust, microplastics, chemicals*
Used cleaning wipes	*Disinfecting wipes, baby wipes (most contain plastic)*
Charcoal & charcoal briquettes	*Contain binders and lighter fluid chemicals*
Coal ash	*Contains heavy metals*
Diseased plants	*Can spread pathogens — bag and trash these*

DIAPERS & PERSONAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS	
Diapers	*Including "compostable" or "eco" brands — none are accepted*
Sanitary products	*Pads, tampons, liners*
Bandages & adhesive strips	
Dental floss	*Most is nylon*
Cotton swabs with plastic sticks	*Paper-stick swabs ARE accepted above*

OTHER ITEMS WE CAN'T ACCEPT	
Glass	*Bottles, jars — recycle these (or drop at Soil Dynamics for glass recycling)*
Metal	*Cans, foil, bottle caps — recycle these*
Ceramics & pottery	*Not compostable*
Clay or crystal cat litter	*See accepted litter types above*
Rocks & gravel	
Soil from construction sites	*May contain contaminants*
Aquarium gravel or sand	
Synthetic floral foam (Oasis)	*Green foam used in flower arrangements*

📦 Compostable Bags We Recommend

You don't have to use bags in your cart. But if you do, only use BPI-certified compostable bags. Here's what to look for:

BioBag	*Our top pick — available at earthhero.com*
Any bag labeled "BPI Certified Compostable"	*Look for the BPI logo, not just the word "compostable"*

Watch out: Many bags sold online say "compostable" or "biodegradable" but are NOT BPI Certified. These will contaminate the compost. If it doesn't have the BPI logo, don't use it.

When in doubt, leave it out.

Not sure about a specific item? Email us at compostclub@hillside.solutions or call 402-332-4710 ext 4.