

# Compost FAQs & Tips

## What is compost?

Composting is the "controlled" process of degrading organic materials into a humus-like substance. Organic materials are plants or animals, or anything produced by plants or animals. Composting speeds up the natural breakdown of organic material into particles and nutrients. When added to soil, these particles and nutrients contribute to better growing conditions for plants by breaking up heavy soils, increasing soil nutrient content and helping the soil retain air and water. Materials that are not organic, such as plastic, synthetic rubber, metal or synthetics will not degrade into compost.

## What happens to my compost?

Your bins are specially designed for Automated Collection. The Town of Olds has contracted with Waste Connections of Canada for Residential collection. When you roll your green bin to the curb (or alley, depending on where you live) on your Collection Day, a truck equipped with a lifting mechanism on the side picks up your bin and dumps it into the enclosed holding tank on the truck. The loading process takes only a few seconds and is controlled by the driver from inside the truck. Automation eliminates manual loading, thus reducing staff costs and job-related injuries, and one truck can cover large residential areas very quickly.

Once a truck is full, the potential compost is taken to the Olds College Composting Centre, where it is dumped in "windrows." The raw material is then inspected - if it is contaminated with non-organic materials, it is not acceptable and must be disposed of in the same way as garbage, at a greater cost to the taxpayer. If the material is not contaminated, it is screened, ground, and turned regularly over several weeks to maximize aeration and decomposition until it has become rich compost.

## What if my bin isn't picked up?

Bin collection starts very early in the morning. Your bin must be out by 7.00 am. To maintain the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the system, drivers do not drive all over town to pick up bins that were not put out on time. If the mistake is on the driver's part, he will return to pick up the missed bin. Your bin may also not be picked up if there are vehicles or other obstructions that prevent the truck from getting close enough to pick up the bin, or if your bin is put out incorrectly (e.g. backwards, sideways, or not in the correct pickup point). As well, if you put the wrong bin out, or on the wrong day, or if your compost bin is contaminated with non-compostable materials, it won't be picked up. Call Waste Connections of Canada at 403.343.1691 with questions about missed bins.

## What happens if my bin is damaged or stolen?

All bins are the property of the Town of Olds. It is your responsibility to ensure that your bin is kept secure. If your bin is damaged beyond repair during collection while out on your Collection Day, we will replace it at no direct charge to you. However, if you cause / allow the damage or if your bin is stolen, you will be required to pay for a replacement. Each case is investigated.

## What happens if I move?

Bins are the property of the Town of Olds and must remain at the address to which they have been assigned. Bins are marked with unique serial numbers, which are recorded.

## What Can I Put in My Green Compost Bin?

GREEN COMPOST BIN	
YES	NO
Solid food waste	Plastic, glass, ceramics
Grass clippings, plant waste	Metal, foil, Styrofoam
Soiled pizza boxes	Paper products (recycle them)
<a href="#">BioBags</a>	Feminine hygiene products, diapers
	Sod, tree trunks, branches, roots
	Synthetics like vinyl, nylon, polyester