

NEWS RELEASE

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City audit of green bins highlights areas for improvement

Summary

A recent audit of the City's green bins has found that almost 1/4 of bins put out at the curb contain non-compostable materials.

The "bin dip" found that the main things finding their way into the green bin that shouldn't be there are plastic bags, food packaging and items that residents may think are compostable but actually aren't.

Whilst almost 1/4 of bins were contaminated, the actual amount of contamination compared to complaint materials was very small. The audit found that less than 1% of the weight and less than 1% of the volume of the material audited comprised of contaminants. This means that overall residents are doing a very good job of separating organics from garbage.

The City would like to thank residents for their efforts in reducing waste being sent to landfill.

Strategic Link: The green bin audit supports the City's ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability.

Key Points

- The main types of contamination were categorized as: i. Small food related items (e.g. bread clips), ii. Plastic bags, iii. Food in packaging, iv. Confusing items (e.g. foil lined card and dryer lint).
- The City would like to remind residents to look for the compostable logo when choosing bags to line their green bin and kitchen catcher.
- Residents should be careful not to accidentally include non-compostable food related items into the green bin. Common offenders included bread clips and twist ties.
- All packaging needs to be removed from food items before it can be placed in the bin. It is important to take the time to remove the wrapper from the cheese or to take the oranges out of the bag before binning them.

Quotes

"The audit is like a health check of the City's curbside organics program, overall I would say we are pretty healthy. However almost 1/4 of the bins we audited did contain some type of contamination, albeit very small. It is important that residents are mindful when using their green bin, every single item they put in there has to be compostable. My job is to eliminate confusion from the situation so I will be putting more effort into helping residents be clear on exactly which items are and aren't compostable."

Charlotte Davis
Manager of Sanitation, Recycling and Public Works Administration.
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- The City of Nanaimo began to collect household organic waste in 2011. Organic waste is collected weekly. The separation of organics from garbage has led to a 50% reduction in waste sent to landfill.
- Bags marked as "biodegradable" are not actually compostable and only breakdown into small pieces of plastic. Bags marked with the compostable logo are made from plant starches and completely breakdown into soil.
- The City would like to remind residents that the following items are not compostable: foil lined card, plastic food wrap, butter foil, dental floss, cotton, cotton wool, cigarette butts, dryer sheets, dryer lint and hair. Please do not include these items in your green bin.

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