

We Compost!

Make Compost, Not Trash

Using Bags for Food Waste Collection

Compostable Bags Only

Cedar Grove, the compost processing facility for food waste collected through the We Compost! Program, only accepts specific brands of compostable plastics bags which are certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). Cedar Grove prohibits non-biodegradable plastics due to the increased processing cost and reduction in the resale value of the finished compost product. Unwanted plastic is the most prevalent contaminant in food waste. If unwanted contamination is present, the load of food waste will be rejected and sent to landfill instead.

To Line, or not to Line?

Because regular plastic can liners, along with other non-biodegradable plastic products, are not acceptable in the We Compost! Program, one of the decisions that participating businesses need to make is whether or not to use liners in the food waste bins. There are essentially three alternatives:

1) Use no liner for interior bins, and rinse interior and/or exterior bins after they are empty.

Advantages: avoided liner purchase cost; food waste bin clearly identifiable

Disadvantages: more frequent bin washing; potential for increased labor cost

Coping Strategies: Designated bin washing station and procedure

2) Use regular plastic liner for interior bins, empty only the loose contents into the exterior bin for collection and either dispose of the liner in the trash, or reuse it in the interior food waste bin for additional loads.

Advantages: less expensive than biodegradable bags, similar to existing garbage setup

Disadvantages: potential for contaminating food waste, bin with liner may not be distinguishable from garbage, heavier bag loads

Coping Strategies: solid color-coded and well labeled interior bins, fill bins/bags part way instead of to the top, secure liner in bin with rubber bands or bungees so it won't slip out when emptied.



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3) Use biodegradable liners in all interior organics bins, in which case the liner and its contents can be emptied together into the exterior collection bin.

Advantages: simpler to use, no increased labor cost, less potential for contaminating food waste

Disadvantages: higher cost than regular liners, potentially limited shelf life, regular plastic bags may be mistakenly substituted, more susceptible to ripping or tearing.

Coping Strategies: only use biodegradable bags in food waste bins, purchase bags that are color-coded or labeled as compostable, order in smaller quantities or sizes, don't fill them all the way.

Price Comparison

BPI-certified compostable bags currently cost about 4 times more than non-BPI-certified polyethylene-based bags. The price is likely to come down as more businesses demand their use.

***Sysco currently carries at least one brand of BPI-certified biodegradable bags**