



Food to Flowers

Custodial and Kitchen Staff Information

Food to Flowers is a lunchroom composting program that recycles leftover food scraps and food-soiled paper. Schools in Thurston County have seen an approximately 75% reduction in kitchen and cafeteria waste! Schools may also benefit by:

- Reducing the amount of garbage produced and lowering trash hauling cost;
- Giving students hands-on experience in composting and resource conservation;
- Raising community awareness about composting and waste reduction; and
- Creating a more earth-friendly school.

Thurston County Solid Waste is assisting Thurston County schools with the set up of the Food to Flowers program. Thurston County provides sort line-set up, assemblies, initial training, student activities, signage and other related material.

Below is some basic information on how the program looks in the cafeteria . . .

After students are finished eating, they dump their lunch trays into containers. Due to the quick lunches, **the students need to move through the line quickly**. Materials are sorted as follows:

1. **Forks/Spoons** (This is not available at all schools): Metal forks and spoons only (no plastic). These will go in a bucket with water or on a tray. Also be aware that the school you volunteer at may use SpudWare, which is biodegradable and is placed in the Food and Paper bin.
2. **Food Re-Use** (This is not available at all schools): Un-opened packaged food that does not require refrigeration or heating can be saved for re-use (such as animal cookies, saltine crackers, etc). However, some schools do re-use un-opened milk cartons. Students should set re-usable items on the designated tray next to milk/juice dumping bucket.
3. **Milk/Juice Bucket**: Milk, juice, and other liquids are dumped in bucket (with strainer to catch straws). Encourage the children to leave the straw in the strainer; this will speed up the line. Also praise those that have their cartons open prior to coming up to the line, and remind those that haven't to try to do so next time.
4. **Recycle Bin**: Steel, tin and aluminum cans, plastic bottles (no lids), and empty yogurt containers (no lids). Full yogurt containers that have been opened must be thrown away.
5. **Garbage Bin**: This bin is for all items that are not recyclable at school, such as: disposable plastic apple juice cups, Styrofoam, plastic utensils, bottle and yogurt lids, plastic bags, wrappers (chip, cookie, granola/candy bar, ect.), straws, plastic butter cups, etc.

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6. **Food and Paper Bin:** Food waste and soiled paper (napkins, paper plates, paper lunch bags, ect.). The biodegradable bags used in the Food and Paper bin are tied off early (1/4 full) since food waste becomes VERY heavy. Just line the bin with a new biodegradable bag on top off the full bag.

In the kitchen . . .

1. **Commingled Recycling:** All metal containers, plastic jugs, and aseptic containers (soup and juice boxes). Glass cannot go in the commingled.
2. **Glass Recycling:** Glass has its own container.
3. **FoodPlus Recycling:** Paper, waxed cardboard, and all foods - including bones and dairy. No grease or liquids.
4. **Trash:** Anything that cannot go in the above three containers.

Transferring FoodPlus materials from cafeteria container to outdoor container:

Food gets heavy – do not overfill bags or they will tear. Line indoor containers with plastic or biodegradable bags. Tie off bags when ¼ full and leave in container. Line container with another bag – tie off when ¼ full and leave in container. Keep repeating. When lunch is over, wheel bin outdoors and transfer bags into outdoor container. No plastic bags go into the outdoor FoodPlus bin – cut or dump bags into bin and then throw empty bags into the trash.

To Bag or Not to Bag???

Facilities with organics collection service need to determine how they will collect their materials. There are three options:

1. Use no liners for interior or exterior organics bins, and rinse exterior and interior bins daily. Many facilities with a location to rinse bins go bagless. This method is the biggest change from bag-based trash management. In addition to reduced bag usage (and cost), this method offers staff a clear visual cue to place only food scraps in unlined containers. You must meet the Environmental Health requirements of washing out your containers in a sanitary sewer system, not a storm drain or area that drains onto the street.
2. Use traditional plastic liners for interior organics bins, emptying **ONLY** the contents into the exterior organics bin for collection and disposing of the liner in the trash or leaving in the interior organics bin for additional use (probably throwing out at the end of the day). Businesses that are concerned with the price of biodegradable bags, but which are unable to rinse interior bins after emptying them, often use this method. Reduces need to rinse interior bins and may reduce liner usage if the bags are replaced only when necessary. It does not eliminate the need to rinse exterior bins after collection.
3. Use biodegradable liners in all interior bins. Allows employees to continue practice of bagging materials as they have in the past. Odors, pest problems, and the need to rinse bins are reduced

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because the food scraps are contained in the biodegradable bag. However, costs for biodegradable bags are higher than plastic bags and are not as strong. Food waste can be quite heavy. You would need to be cautious about overfilling biodegradable bags. Dumping the interior bin out into the exterior bin, rather than lifting the bag out of the interior bin, can help with this issue.

If you chose to use biodegradable bags, we suggest using USCC/BPI certified. (US Composting Council / Biodegradable Products Institute, using ASTM D 6400-99, a US standard method to test for biodegradability and compostability.)

Thurston County does not provide bags. We recommend you contact the companies on the back of this sheet directly for more information. This list is not an endorsement, just companies we are aware of. If you locate others, please let us know and we can add. Please note, there is a local distributor listed.

Vendors of Biodegradable Can Liners

Silver Springs Organics, LLC
Greg Schoenbachler 360-446-SOIL (7645) ext.101
Fax: 360-446-1197
Located in Thurston County
www.SilverSpringsOrganics.com

Sound Janitorial Supply
Jodie Hildreth 360-943-4611
6200 Capitol Blvd
Tumwater, WA 98511

BioBag
Dave Williams 800-959-2247
BIOgroupUSA, Inc.
107 Regents Pl. Ponte Vedra Beach FL 32082
dave.williams@biogroupusa.com
www.biogroupusa.com

Biodegradable Food Services, LLC
Kevin Duffy 541-593-2191
17217 Blue Heron Drive
Bend, Oregon 97707
www.bdfs.net

Eco Film / Eco Works
Tim Rayburn 425-822-3530
CORTEC Corporation
4119 White Bear Parkway
St. Paul MN 55110
email: tim@asenw.com
www.ecofilm.com

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Nat-Ur, Inc.
Russ Wegner 415-552-1000
3433 West El Segundo
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(Formerly Biocorp) www.Nat-Ur.com

Controlling Fruit (Vinegar) Flies

Fruit flies can be an issue for establishments that generate food waste. The segregation of food waste, such as with the new recycling program, is not necessarily the cause of fruit fly infestations, but may make you notice the flies in concentrated areas. Just like with other insects, such as ants and mosquitoes, you may never fully defeat them. The goal is to control them and keep them outside and "away."

Below are a few collected suggestions on controlling them that you can use. If you have any other methods that you have found useful, please share with us so we can add them to our list.

- Put about an inch of apple cider vinegar in a jar with some small holes poked in the lid. The flies go in, but they can't find their way out. This can be used indoors or out by the food waste collection cans.
- Take a 600ml or bigger soft drink bottle and cut it in half (around) about a third of the way down from the top. Put an old tomato or some fruit in the bottom of the bottle with a small amount of water. Take the top third of the bottle without its lid and turn it upside down and put it into the bottle (like a funnel). The flies can fly in, but don't make it back out again! This can be used indoors or out by the food waste collection cans.
- Fruit flies tend to live and breed in drain traps. Pour a pot of boiling water down drains one or two times per month.
- Flies can't fly in wind. Forced air fans in doorways keep flies out. Or place a fan high spot and pointed outward/downward – they will drop to the ground.
- There are a variety of traps on the market. Just be certain to check if they are approved to use in food-handling areas and other sensitive situations if using indoors. Ask your Thurston County Health Inspector for suggestions.

The following information is from:

http://www.aandepestcontrol.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=AEPC&Category_Code=Flies

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Fruit Flies



Fruit flies are one stubborn problem for restaurants, food service establishments, and bars. Those are the little flies that you see in and around the food serving areas, bar areas, dining areas and kitchens. Fruit flies as their name suggests, like to breed in fruits, syrups, vegetables, and other decaying organic matter (potted plants). No matter where they breed, these pests are constant companions where food is handled, produced and stored. Adult flies can and will be seen in the most frustrating of places, such as soda machines, liquor bottle spouts, ice machine motors, and anywhere else the customer and of all people the health inspector wants to look.

Controlling these flies is not hard to accomplish but may be very frustrating. Fruit flies can breed in just a little bit of fruit or other crud which can be almost anywhere, so locating and treating areas that are prone to collect food (cracks, behind appliances, and in and around booths in serving area) is a must. These flies can multiply very rapidly and in a short period of time and can become a large problem.

Control

- One of the first steps when controlling fruit flies is sanitation. Fruit flies can breed in the smallest most inconspicuous areas. Locating where food and drink syrup might collect is a good starting point. Serving areas and drains should be checked and treated as needed as part of a regular maintenance schedule. Sealing cracks and voids that collect food and other organic debris is a great way to eliminate places where these flies (and other pests such as roaches and ants) can breed
- Once the cleaning and the caulking has been completed, we suggest you use a product that controls the larval stages of these pests. The product of choice for controlling fruit fly larvae is [Gentrol](#) which contains an Insect Growth Regulator (IGR), which will prevent the larvae from ever becoming adults.
- Controlling the larvae is key to preventing the adults from ending up bothering customers and of course the health inspector.
- Fruit Fly traps are also great to help.

For even more fruit fly tips and information visit:

<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=111045>

Thank you very much for your help with *Food to Flowers!*

Questions? Contact Allyson Ruppenthal of Thurston County Solid Waste at 754-3355 ext. 7676 or via email at ruppena@co.thurston.wa.us

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Adapted from the Clark County, Washington Save Our Scraps program.