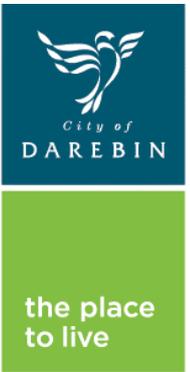


Food and green waste recycling

Frequently Asked Questions updated 14 December 2023

Council expanded its food and green waste recycling service in 2022 to all residents who receive a Council kerbside waste collection service.

This means that all residents can now put all types of food and garden waste into their green lidded bin.



Education Campaign

What is the food and green waste recycling campaign?

Council is delivering a food and green waste education campaign starting in November 2023. The objectives are to increase use of food and green waste bins to reduce food waste sent to landfill and to reduce contamination rate in food and green waste bins. We will communicate with the community through various channels including the Council website and social media, Darebin Community News and e-newsletters, outdoor advertising including bus shelter and retail space ads. We will also deliver a range of face-to-face engagements including visiting community groups, food waste avoidance cooking workshops and an excursion to the food waste processor.

The campaign is funded by Sustainability Victoria's Circular Economy Household Education Fund.

Why is Council running this education campaign?

While food and green waste bins are now available to all eligible households, food and garden waste still makes up approximately 49% of our kerbside household waste sent to landfill. This represents a significant opportunity for Darebin to reduce not only waste sent to landfill but also potential emissions savings.

Our latest waste audit in 2023 also found that the contamination rate for the food and green waste bin was 7.5%, which was a significant increase from 2.7% in 2022. High contamination can result in higher food and green waste recycling costs, and it may also put the processing facility workers at risk. This is why we must minimise contamination.

Environmental benefits of recycling food waste

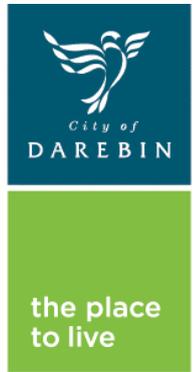
Why is Council collecting food waste?

Food waste makes up approximately 43% of Darebin's kerbside household waste sent to landfill. Introducing food waste recycling is one of our biggest opportunities to quickly reduce carbon emissions. If everyone with a food and green waste bin in Darebin recycles their food waste, we can save 9,000 tonnes from landfill and 17,800 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions from entering the atmosphere. This is the same as taking 6,130 cars off the road each year. It will also save on costs. The average Victorian household throws away \$2,200 worth of food a year.

What happens to food and green waste after it's collected?

Your food and green waste is taken to the Veolia organics recycling facility in Bulla. The facility transforms the waste into compost, mulches and soil products, which are used right here in Victoria for agriculture and horticulture.

Food and green waste recycling



How to use the service

How do I use my food and green waste bin for food?

- Use any airtight container such as a kitchen caddy, ice-cream container, or food container to store your food waste. Keep it somewhere easy to access, like on your kitchen bench or under the sink, so it's close to hand when cooking or clearing up after meals.
- You can line your caddy with newspaper or paper towel and, if you're worried about smells, sprinkle some bi-carb soda.
- Empty the food waste into your food and green waste bin. Make sure your food waste goes in loose without any bags.
- Put your food and green waste bin out for collection. It will be collected every fortnight, alternating with your recycling bin.

What <u>CAN</u> I put in my food and green waste bin?	What <u>CAN'T</u> I put in my food and green waste bin?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetable scraps • Food scraps (cooked or uncooked) • Dairy products and meat products (including seafood, eggs, bones) • Bread, pasta, rice, cereal and other table scraps • Coffee grounds (no used coffee pods or capsules please) • Loose leaf tea (no teabags) • Small amounts of newspaper or paper towel (used to wrap loose food; no tape or ties please) • Grass clippings • Small garden prunings • Twigs and small branches • Leaves • Flowers • Weeds, ivy, creepers and vines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquids (e.g. cooking oil, milk) • Plastic bags, even if labelled compostable or biodegradable • Plastic wrapping (e.g. cling wrap) • Household garbage • Nappies, even if labelled compostable or biodegradable • Soil, pebbles and rocks • Treated or painted timber • Pet droppings • Cat litter, even if labelled compostable or biodegradable • Teabags • Syringes • Textiles • Oily pizza boxes

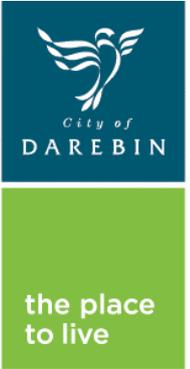
Should I put my food waste in a plastic bag?

No. Plastic bags (even if they're compostable or biodegradable) cannot be put in our green waste recycling bins – plastic contaminates compost. Use a sheet of newspaper or paper towel to wrap your food instead, if needed.

Why can't we use compostable or biodegradable caddy liners?

Council's food waste processor (Veolia) do not accept compostable/biodegradable bags. Biodegradable/compostable products, including caddy liners, do not break down in the system used at the facility. Veolia use an in-vessel composting process, which is rapid and results in a shorter turn-around time and less heat than other commercial systems. Veolia have advised that this means biodegradable and compostable products are still intact at the end of processing and can be seen in the end product. This makes the compost product unattractive to farmers, as it is not possible to distinguish between these materials (which may eventually break down over time) and regular plastic. Other Councils who send food waste to Veolia also do not accept compostable products due to the way they break down.

Food and green waste recycling



How do I keep my green bin from smelling?

- To minimize odour layer lawn clippings and other garden prunings between food scraps.
- Keep your food and green waste bin in a shady area and make sure the lid is kept closed
- Particularly smelly foods like seafood and meat scraps can be kept in the freezer and taken out on bin night.
- If there are food scraps left in the bin after collection, hose it down and let it dry in the sun.

How do I stop my bin from attracting insects?

- Keep the lid closed
- Try to keep bin in the shade
- Some insects are expected however if you keep your bin clean you can avoid larger pests and vermin.

Collection details

Will the frequency of my bin collection change?

General waste bins are emptied weekly and recycling and food and green waste bins are emptied fortnightly. We consulted with the community in 2023 to consider any potential change, and are currently working through the options. If there are any changes to the service, the community will be informed.

Other Councils are changing their general waste (landfill) bin collection to fortnightly. Is Darebin going to change too?

As above.

Service details

Will bin sizes change?

Bin sizes won't change. Council's standard service for food and green waste is a 120L bin with a light green lid.

Can I get a larger green waste bin or an extra green waste bin?

Yes, you can [request a larger food and green waste bin on our website](#).

I am a renter. Can I order an extra/larger food and green waste bin?

If you are a tenant in a rental property and would like a larger or extra food and green waste bin, you will need to contact the property owner or agent and ask them to make the request on your behalf.

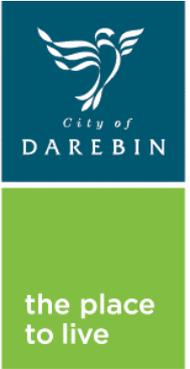
Will my general waste and recycling services change?

Not at this time.

The State Government has mandated several changes to how Councils across Victoria manage their waste. This includes transitioning to four core waste and recycling services before 2027:

- Red lid bin: general waste
- Green lid bin: food and green waste
- Yellow lid bin: recycling (of plastics, metals, paper, cardboard: known as co-mingled recycling)
- Purple lid bin: glass recycling (providing centralised collection points for glass may also be an option.)

Food and green waste recycling



What will I pay if I currently have a larger 240L green bin, not a standard 120L?

If you have, or you want, a 240L green bin, you will need to pay an extra fee for the larger green bin (\$62 full; \$41 concession).

Is the food and green waste bin an optional service?

No. All ratepayers receiving Council's kerbside waste collection service must have a food and green waste bin.

Do I still have to pay extra for non-standard bins?

Yes. You will need to pay extra for:

- Larger general waste bins
- Additional or larger food and green waste bins

For more information, visit <https://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Waste-environment-and-climate/Bins-and-waste-collection/Ask-for-a-new-bin-size>

I live in an apartment. Can I use the service?

You can use the service if your apartment block has a Council managed waste service. If your bins have a Darebin Council logo on them, you are currently receiving a Council service.

I live in an apartment building and my neighbours and I want to share a food and green waste bin between us. How can we request less than one bin for each property?

If you would like to share a bin between multiple apartments, please email mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au to make this request. Please ensure you let us know how many people live in your apartments.

Can my business or school use the service?

Businesses, schools, body corporate representatives and commercial properties cannot access Council's food and green waste service. We do not currently have the vehicles and services set up for these types of collections.

You can consider seeking a private food recycling service. For more information on a number of free and paid food recycling options, look for "Business organic waste recycling" on our website's [Sustainable business page](#).

For more information on composting visit www.darebin.vic.gov.au/foodwaste.

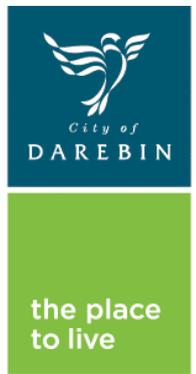
I don't want a new food and green waste bin. Why did I receive one?

Providing a food and green waste service to all households is an important part of the State Government's Recycling Victoria reforms. The State Government has introduced legislation that requires councils to provide a food and green waste bin to all households that receive council's kerbside waste collection service. In Darebin, food waste makes up about half of what goes in household general waste bins and gets sent to landfill. Expanding our food and green waste service means we can reduce waste to landfill across the municipality.

I already have a compost bin (or worm farm) in my garden, so do I actually need a new food and green waste bin?

Council encourages residents to compost at home if they can, but there are some items you cannot compost at home, or put in worm farms, which you **can** put in the Council bins, including meat, bones, dairy, citrus, garlic and onion.

Food and green waste recycling



I already compost at home and do not want a food and green waste bin. If I will not use the service, why am I being charged a kerbside waste service fee?

From July 2022 you would have noticed two separate charges on your rates notice: a kerbside waste collection fee and a public waste rate. The kerbside waste collection fee covers not only Council's food and green waste service, but also the general waste and recycling. This change represents Darebin joining the vast majority of Victorian Councils in introducing a separate waste service charge. Visit our [Waste Service Fee](#) page for more information about Council's changes.

Did you consult the community about introducing a new food and green waste bins?

Yes, Council consulted with the community when developing our Waste and Recycling Strategy in 2020. Reducing food waste was identified as a priority for the community. We also consulted on our Council Plan 2021-2025 which included an action to increase food waste recycling through Council's food and green waste service as priority action to reduce waste. We consulted with the community about our kerbside general waste and recycling services again in 2023.

Is Council rolling out purple-lidded bins for glass?

As part of the State Government's changes to how councils across Victoria manage their waste, all councils must transition to four core waste and recycling services before 2027, including glass recycling.

Kitchen caddies

How do I get a kitchen caddy?

You can pick up a kitchen caddy from the Preston Customer Service centre. You can also use any kind of container as a caddy. Suitable containers include lidded buckets, ice cream containers, large yoghurt tubs and Tupperware.

My kitchen caddy was stolen/lost/damaged. Can I have another?

Yes, you can pick up a kitchen caddy from the Preston Customer Service centre. You can also use any kind of container as a replacement, including lidded buckets, ice cream containers, large yoghurt tubs and Tupperware.

RFID technology

I've noticed a microchip in the top of my bin. What is this for?

All of the new food and green waste bins have a piece of technology called a radio frequency identification device (RFID) fitted in the lid. This little RFID tag is an electronic version of the serial number printed on the side of your bin and we use this to identify which household each bin belongs to.

How does the RFID technology work?

RFID technology consists of a tag (the one on your bin lid) and a reader. Readers are used to scan the RFID tag and identify the bin's serial number. The tag itself does not measure or collect data – it only contains your bin's serial number.

Will Council use the RFID technology to monitor what is in our bins?

No. But we will continue to conduct our manual recycling bin checks which involve visual spot checks by our collection contractors. We also conduct an annual bin audit of all our kerbside services, with 250 bins randomly selected from across the municipality for each waste stream, the contents of these combined bins are then sorted into categories.

Food and green waste recycling

These are both standard procedures to monitor contamination levels and inform our education programs to help the community sort their waste correctly.

We do this because it's Council's responsibility to ensure what we collect and send for processing or to landfill is appropriate, for example, e-waste being sent to landfill is illegal. We can also be fined by our waste processors if our waste is contaminated, for example if our food and green waste is contaminated with plastic bags, glass, or general waste. Our priority is also ensuring that we are on track to achieving a circular economy.

Will Darebin start charging people extra if they put too much or the wrong thing in their bins?

No. Darebin does not issue fines or increase the waste charge based on people putting the wrong item in the bin, or overfilling bins.

More information

I want to find out more about food waste recycling.

Visit darebin.vic.gov.au/foodwaste, call 03 8470 8888 or email mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au

I'd like information about food waste recycling in my language.

Visit darebin.vic.gov.au/foodwaste to download PDFs in Arabic, Chinese Traditional, Greek, Macedonian, Italian, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Spanish, Somali, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Call 03 8470 8470 and ask to speak to someone about food and green waste recycling in your language. Or call 03 8470 8888 or email mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au to have a pamphlet in your language mailed to you.

