

# GreenWays

THE QUARTERLY RESIDENTIAL NEWSLETTER FROM GREENWASTE OF PALO ALTO SUMMER 2024

## INSIDE THE MATERIALS RECOVERY FACILITY



**Ever wonder how your recyclables get processed after collection? It is truly remarkable!** Our drivers take your material to GreenWaste's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), located in San Jose. This facility processes all of Palo Alto's residential and commercial recyclables, along with materials from other local cities.

Upon arrival at the MRF, the truck full of recyclables is weighed at the scale house. Then the action begins – the truck unloads the material onto the tipping floor to be picked up and fed onto a metering bin which controls the flow of the material. The material falls onto the conveyor belt passing through 8 pre-sort stations where staff sort some materials by hand before it is reintroduced back to the conveyor belt. The material continues along through a variety of state-of-the-art mechanisms and processes including sorting stations, screens, separators, bag breakers, magnets, and an eddy current separator. These mechanisms and processes separate the materials into individual categories including cardboard, paper, glass, aluminum, and a variety of plastics. Throughout the whole process, there are quality control stations with sorting staff to remove any contaminants. At the end of the sorting line, the separated commodities are baled and sent to processors to be made into new products.



This systematic process and high-tech equipment allow the MRF to consistently demonstrate unrivaled recovery rates of more than 85% for recyclable materials! GreenWaste is always working on installing new processing methods to increase capacity and improve the sorting of materials. However, it is essential for residents and businesses to properly empty their recyclables and correctly sort them so they are recycle ready. You can feel confident that placing clean recyclables into the blue recycle cart means we are going to get them sorted and sent to be recycled.

To find out more about the MRF watch a virtual tour or check out [www.greenwaste.com/about-us/processing-facility/](http://www.greenwaste.com/about-us/processing-facility/).

## GREENWASTE HIGHLIGHTS



- **2023 GREENWASTE SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**  
GreenWaste released their 2023 Sustainability Report detailing their sustainability goals and progress. The report identifies technological advancements, new programs, partnerships, and employee initiatives. Check out the full report at [www.greenwaste.com/sustainability/esg-reporting/](http://www.greenwaste.com/sustainability/esg-reporting/)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **COMPOST WORKSHOP:**  
Saturday July 27th, 10am - 12pm  
Lucie Stern Community Center  
1305 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto
- **DOCUMENT SHREDDING EVENT:**  
Saturday August 10th, 9am - 12pm  
Baylands Athletic Center, Parking Lot  
1900 Geng Rd, Palo Alto  
[www.cityofpaloalto.org/shred](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/shred)

# PLAN A ZERO WASTE PARTY!

For any type of summer gathering you are planning – BBQ, birthday, pool party, etc. find ways you can incorporate zero waste practices.

Make food waste reduction a priority in planning. Look back on past summer parties to think about how much food was thrown out. Review the type and quantities of food wasted and adjust your purchase this time.

Try the GUEST-IMATOR tool to help you plan portions at, [www.savethefood.com/guestimator](http://www.savethefood.com/guestimator).



Set up waste stations with compost, recycle, and landfill bins to help your guests sort waste properly. Provide guidance and explain the sorting system so guests understand where to place their soiled items. Contact GreenWaste of Palo Alto to assist with planning for waste stations, corresponding signage, and guidance and resources on waste sorting. 650-493-4894 [pacustomerservice@greenwaste.com](mailto:pacustomerservice@greenwaste.com)

Provide reusable foodware at your gathering instead of disposable or skip utensils and plates entirely and service finger food. For reusable foodware, reach out to a Zero Waste Block Leader near you to borrow a party pack – containing 24 sets of reusable foodware and cloth napkins.



Avoid single use decor for your gathering, such as disposable decorations, balloons, and streamers. Instead, consider reusable or compostable decorations such as candles, string lights, decorative table cloths, real foliage, or use your food as a centerpiece. Reduce your waste and invest in decor pieces you can utilize for many years to come.

Help our community reach its Zero Waste goal – utilize these practices at your next gathering. For more information go to [www.cityofpaloalto.org/zwparty](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/zwparty).

## COMPOST AND ITS BENEFITS

Utilizing compost made from organic materials such as food scraps and yard trimmings has many positive environmental benefits. Compost plays a key role in creating healthy soil and can be an invaluable resource for gardening and landscaping.

Benefits of applying compost to soil:

- Conserving water by improving the soil's moisture retention
- Combating climate change by increasing the soil's ability to absorb and sequester carbon
- Enriching soil and reducing the need for chemical fertilizers by adding valuable nutrients
- Encouraging beneficial soil microorganisms such as fungi and bacteria
- Improving soil structure and permeability, helping to slow soil erosion

Keep your compost local and start creating your own compost at home today! You can also pick up free organic compost at the Eleanor Pardee Community Garden Compost Giveaway Station provided by GreenWaste and the City. For compost classes, compost station details, and additional information on compost check out [www.cityofpaloalto.org/compost](http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/compost).

## SORTING GUIDANCE: CLEAN VS. SOILED PAPER

Clean and dry paper products are perfect for your **blue recycle cart**. Any

paper that is dry, clean, and hasn't touched food or liquid should be placed into the blue recycle cart. This includes materials such as broken down and flattened cardboard, catalogs, books, envelopes, newspaper, etc. Shredded paper can be placed into the blue recycle cart if it is bagged in a clear plastic bag and tied shut.

**Greasy, grimy, gooey, or wet paper, referred to as "soiled paper" is perfect for your green compost cart.**

Any paper product involved in cooking, eating, wiping your face, or blowing your nose cannot be recycled and needs to be placed into the green compost cart. This

includes materials such as pizza boxes, paper take out boxes, paper coffee cups, paper plates, paper towels, napkins, tissues, etc. Any paper product that has touched food or liquid should be placed into the green compost cart so it can be diverted from the landfill and composted instead.

