

## Oceanside Residential Backyard Composting FAQs

The City of Oceanside is pleased to provide a home composting solution for residents and educators whom are ready to turn their food scraps and yard waste into garden gold! While supplies last, the City is offering FREE static composting and vermicomposting bins to Oceanside residents and Oceanside-based educators, along with digital how-to guides, video tutorials, and technical assistance. Visit [GreenOceanside.org](http://GreenOceanside.org) to register to receive a bin, view composting resources, and learn how to access virtual composting workshops and trainings.

### **What is composting and why should I do it?**

Compost is the rich, earthy-smelling, dark decomposed matter that provides a nutrient rich soil amendment for the benefit of your garden. With the help of living organisms, organic matter can breakdown to become compost that will reduce the need for commercial fertilizer, improve soil quality while conserving moisture retention, while effectively recycling food scraps and yard waste.

### **What is static composting and what materials can I compost?**

Static composting is a traditional form of composting that takes layers of brown materials like branches and dried yard waste with green materials like grass clippings and food scraps and slowly breaks down over time. This is a great option if you have enough backyard space and plenty of dry yard waste to combine with your wet food scraps. This method likes a 50-50 ratio of brown to green materials, and items from your kitchen to add include fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, breads, and tea leaves.

### **What is vermicomposting and what materials can I compost?**

Vermicomposting uses worms, specifically red wigglers, to break down food scraps and create nutrient rich worm castings, to be used as a soil amendment. This method requires much less space than traditional static composting, and can be stored indoors. Instead of large amounts of yard waste, worms simply need food scraps and paper products to stay happy. Worms love fruit and vegetable peels, coffee grounds and filters, moldy fruit, vegetables, and breads, egg shells, and shredded paper. Limit feeding them citrus peels, spicy foods like onions and peppers, plate scraps, and yard waste. Tip! Worms really like their scraps smaller for quicker decomposition, so consider chopping your materials before adding to the bin.

### **What shouldn't go in my compost bin?**

You will want to avoid materials that are difficult or odorous when breaking down during decomposition, such as meat, poultry, fish, bones, dairy products, oily food and salty foods. Also be sure to keep any inorganic materials like plastic, metal, glass, and even vegetable stickers out of your compost pile, as they will not break down.



## **Where should I put my compost bin?**

Static compost bins should be placed in shady spots to ensure less frequent watering and ideally on top of soil to aid in the decomposition process. Your vermicomposting bin can be located inside or outside, but it is best located outside in shade, with direct access to the ground for the worm leachate to access and drain into. If you prefer to keep your bin indoors, you will need to remove and empty the leachate frequently, preferably everyday, to ensure the material does not become toxic. Remember that worms like to be kept between 55°F-75°F, but should not be exposed to temperatures colder than 35°F or warmer than 90°F to ensure survival. To begin, you will need at least one pound of red wiggler or night crawler worms for your vermicompost bin. At this time, the City of Oceanside will not be providing worms with your FREE vermicompost container. You can order your worms from a local or online vendor.

## **I'm ready to start backyard composting! How do I get my bin?**

If you are an Oceanside resident, getting your compost bin is easy and convenient. Visit [GreenOceanside.org](http://GreenOceanside.org) to register to receive your bin and provide your confirmation email along with proof of residency or Oceanside-based educator ID to Agri Service staff. Bins can be picked up at the El Corazon Compost Facility located at 3210 Oceanside Blvd, Oceanside 92056. The facility is managed by Agri Service Inc. and is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturdays 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

## **Do you offer any training or assistance if we're new to composting?**

Yes! The Green Oceanside team is here to help you set up your home composting system from the comfort of your computer! Visit [GreenOceanside.org](http://GreenOceanside.org) to view videos explaining how to separate food scraps while in your kitchen, and tutorials for the static and vermicomposting bins. Email [GreenOceanside@oceansideca.org](mailto:GreenOceanside@oceansideca.org) to sign up for one-on-one training opportunities and to hear about upcoming virtual workshops and resources.

## **Troubleshooting Support**

**Experiencing Odors?** Your bin isn't getting enough oxygen and needs to be turned. Add some more brown material as well.

**Material not breaking down?** You may need to add more moisture or cut your organics into smaller pieces for faster decomposition.

**Have excessive ants, flies or rodents?** Be sure to avoid materials like dairy, meat, and oils, as they attract visitors as they breakdown. With ants and flies, add more water and bury the food scraps to the core of the pile beneath brown materials. Also make sure your lid is secure.



**Worms not eating?** Sometimes your worms can have a picky pallet and won't finish everything you feed them. Be sure to add variety, and avoid spicy foods like onions, peppers, garlic, and citrus peels.

