



Garbage to Garden

Curbside Composting



Founded in 2012 and based in Portland, Maine, Garbage to Garden is the beloved curbside composting service that offers residents, schools and commercial businesses a convenient way to recycle food scraps, including meat, dairy and bones, to be used to renew our local soil.



Living in a 2nd story apartment, Tyler Frank didn't have space for a compost pile. He and his roommates wondered why they couldn't just put compost out on the curb like trash and recycling, and in the moment between wondering and wishing, Garbage to Garden took root.

The program grew quickly by word of mouth, and by residents seeing the buckets on the curb.

Frank developed a relationship with Benson Farm for the composting.

Their shared commitment to sustainability, vision for closing the food recycling loop, and belief in the mission of Garbage to Garden led to a partnership that helped Garbage to Garden become what it is today.



Closing the farm-to-table-to-farm nutrient loop



Innovative Solutions

Humble beginnings necessitated creative solutions and resourcefulness. We work daily to mirror the values we encourage in the community; to reduce waste by repairing and reusing, and to save costs by finding efficiencies everywhere:

- Truck beds and trailers were customized and fabricated in house
- Proprietary routing software was created when nothing suitable existed
- Compost bags are collected back for reuse
- Broken buckets are repaired with a plastic welder
- Used fryer oil is collected separately for recycling into biofuel and the degreaser used to wash our buckets
- Empty grain bags from Allagash Brewing are sewn into bags used to contain bucket lids en route



Sewing bucket lid bags



25 TONS
collected daily

Servicing
15,000
households





MAINE SERVICE AREAS

Bath
Brunswick
Cape Elizabeth
Cumberland
Falmouth
Portland
South Portland
Westbrook
Waterville
Yarmouth

MASSACHUSETTS SERVICE AREAS



Arlington
Belmont
Medford
Somerville
Boston - August 2022
Service begins for 10K residents

(Drop off sites and commercial accounts extend into surrounding communities beyond curbside service areas)

A man wearing a high-visibility yellow-green safety vest over a grey t-shirt, grey shorts, and blue gloves is walking on a paved driveway. He is carrying two large green plastic buckets, one in each hand. The bucket in his left hand has a black lid, while the one in his right hand has a white lid. In the background, there is a red SUV parked in a driveway, a blue garage door, and a wooden fence. To the right of the man, there are several large blue recycling bins and a black trash bin. The scene is set outdoors with trees and foliage in the background.

**Curbside composting:
So easy, you won't even
get your hands dirty**

Standard Curbside Service in Maine

- 5-gallon bucket delivered to resident (\$5 fee to add a new bucket into circulation)
- Each week, bucket is emptied and swapped out for a clean one
- Residents can request free finished compost (up to one bag per week) to be delivered on their service day
- \$19/month, or free when you volunteer





Hobart washing machine cleans buckets with degreaser made from recycled kitchen oil

Massachusetts no-swap service

- Residents purchase a 5-gallon bucket (\$5) or a 12-gallon bin (\$20)
- Each week, bin/bucket is emptied and resident is left with a fresh compostable liner (they are responsible for cleaning/maintaining bin)
- Residents can request free finished compost (up to one bag per week) to be delivered on their service day
- \$15/month, or free when you volunteer



Volunteering



Our volunteer program provides monthly opportunities for participants to earn free service by volunteering with us and our community partners.

Opportunities vary seasonally throughout the year, including but not limited to:

- Helping us provide composting and zero-waste services for events
- Bagging compost
- Assisting with food rescue and food access efforts - gleaning, collecting donations from businesses, helping at a local food pantry or soup kitchen
- Environmental cleanups and conservation
- Helping at community and school gardens
- And more!

Free municipal drop off sites

- Suitable both in rural communities without trash collection, and dense urban areas in neighborhoods
- Municipally funded
- Accessible any time
- Need to be more closely monitored for contamination





Benefits to the community

- Waste reduction
- More efficient waste processing
- Saves taxpayer dollars
- Creates a valuable resource for local gardeners and farmers

Pay-as-you-throw
programs in Maine
incentivize waste
diversion through
recycling and
composting, by
requiring residents
to purchase city
trash bags



Did You Know?

1 household composting for 3 years...



= 1 TON

...of food waste diverted from landfills!

City of South Portland

Ran a 2017 Pilot Program to explore municipal curbside program, which they plan to revisit.

Residents have three options: 6 free drop off sites, our standard service option, as well as a discounted reduced service:

- Residents pick up free countertop and curbside bins at Transfer Station (purchased by the City)
- Curbside bin emptied weekly
- Resident responsible for cleaning and maintaining bin
- Finished compost available for purchase (but not included)
- \$12/month





City of Medford

Preferred Vendor Model - in partnership with the City, Garbage to Garden offers Medford residents a discounted rate based on enrollment numbers. The City helps to promote the program through their outlets:

- Residents purchase their 12-gallon bin
- Curbside bin emptied weekly, left with a fresh compostable liner
- Resident responsible for cleaning and maintaining bin
- 1 bag of finished compost per year, additional available for purchase
- \$8.99/month

City of Boston

Municipally-funded curbside food waste collection program, with limited enrollment, beginning August 1, 2022:

- Residents receive a free starter kit including countertop and curbside bins, how to manual, roll of liners
- Curbside bin emptied weekly
- Resident responsible for cleaning and maintaining bin
- Finished compost available for residents to purchase
- Free to enrolled residents, additional 10K residents added each year



CITY of BOSTON



Public Works

What Can I Compost?

YES

ALL FOOD SCRAPS

(INCLUDES VEGETABLES, FRUIT, CITRUS, MEAT, DAIRY, BONES, SHELLS, COOKED & SPOILED FOOD, PITS, PEELS & SEEDS)

COFFEE GROUNDS & FILTERS

NAPKINS & FOOD-SOILED PAPER

WAX & PARCHMENT PAPER

SMALL PLANTS & FLOWERS

WINE CORKS & TOOTHPICKS

PET HAIR

NO

PLASTIC

STYROFOAM

METAL

GLASS

PET WASTE
& DIAPERS

CHEMICALS

PLEASE REMOVE:
STICKERS, TWIST-TIES,
RUBBER BANDS, TIN FOIL

 Garbage to Garden

What is composting?

“Composting is the return of organic materials to a rich, stable, humus-like material through a managed decomposition process that is mediated by microbe metabolism.”

(James McSweeney, 2019)



**We accept all food waste - even meat, bones,
dairy, and weeds! But how?**

The composting experts at our local partner farms incorporate collected food scraps into massive piles called "windrows."





These piles reach temperatures of over 130° because of the energy produced by heat-loving bacteria called "thermophiles," so nature does the cooking herself. Compost microorganisms are powerful enough to break down bones, weed seeds, pathogens, and even toxic chemicals.







Biweekly 30-50yd deliveries of finished compost to be bagged for participants.



Over 10 years, Garbage to Garden has grown to employ 36 full-time employees, and numerous part time and seasonal employees. Our services have extend beyond residential, commercial, and municipal composting to include zero-waste services, composting and full waste management for events of any size, and garden bed installations.



In 2022 alone, we have...

- recycled 4,317,885.16 lbs
- distributed 688 yards of finished compost and 286 yards of raised bed mix to participants, schools and community gardens
- installed 169 local Maine hemlock raised garden beds
- provided composting services for 70 events, including several with attendance in the thousands to tens of thousands
- involved 30-50 volunteers per month

And for the next phase of Garbage to Garden:



- The farm on Burrill Farm Road
- Aerated Static Pile (ASP) Composting
- Greenhouse for growing seedlings and finished compost product testing
- Expanded educational offering