

# Residential Composting Pilot FAQ

## **Why did we choose the locations we did for pilots?**

The locations for the residential pilot were selected because they have kitchens. For the pilot, we started with apartments that house both graduate and undergraduate students, so we would get an understanding of how each subset of students engage in composting efforts. We also selected a medical campus location, so we ensured we were piloting across the entire campus.

## **What is the goal for expansion in the future?**

Our goal is to roll out composting across campus. Based on our Zero Waste plan, we estimate that 40% of our waste stream is compostable. To get this out of our trash stream, we need to build a robust composting infrastructure across campus. This pilot is the first step in this process.

From previous pilots we have conducted on campus, we have learned that different areas of our campus will need very different solutions to be successful at composting. This includes, and is not limited to, bin types and sizes, how bins are monitored and disposed of at campus loading docks, signage in the buildings, and where bins are placed. This individualized solution process takes time to identify and implement.

We would like to roll the program out across campus as fast as possible. As these initial pilots progress, we will evaluate additional buildings to determine where our next phase will be.

## **How can you express your interest in future program expansion?**

If you think your building should be prioritized, please email [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu) and explain why, and we will factor it into our prioritization schedule.

## **Where does the compost go?**

To learn more about our composting process on campus, please view this instructional video:  
<https://www.bu.edu/articles/2022/video-where-does-bu-food-waste-go/>

## **How long are the pilots going?**

These initial pilots will run for the duration of the Spring 2023 semester. After that point, we will evaluate the success of the program. If things go well, we will expand to the next round of buildings for the Fall 2023 semester.

We will utilize the summer to brainstorm solutions and evaluate necessary changes. In the fall, we will implement those changes and track to see if there are improvements in the reported issues.

## **When do the pilot programs start?**

The pilots are going to start during the Spring 2023 Semester.

## **What goes in and what does not go into the bins?**

Any and all organic material can go in CERO compost containers, including: dairy products and eggshells, fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, and seafood (including bones and fat trimmings), bread, rice and other grains, beans, and even spoiled food.

All food-soiled paper, including: coffee grounds and filters, paper napkins and paper towels, and tea bags (please remove staples!)

Other materials including: leaves, weeds and grass clippings, BPI Certified compostable liner bags, are also acceptable.

### **What do I do if my bin breaks?**

Please reach out to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu).

### **What if I am unsure about a material going into the compost bin?**

If you are unsure about what goes into the bin, please review our waste signage on our Linktree or in the brochure you received at the beginning of the pilot. You can also reach out to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu) with specific questions.

### **What do I do if I see contamination in the compost bin?**

Please take a picture of it and report it to BU Sustainability. If you see someone putting a contaminant into the compost, please inform them kindly that it isn't acceptable and refer them to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu) if they have questions.

### **Why do we have a liner on our compost bin?**

To eliminate the 'yuck' factor of composting, compostable liner bags are used. They are made from a corn-based material that breaks down fully when composted. These liner bags prevent food scraps from sticking to the bottom of the bin and reduces the need to wash the bin regularly.

If you want to keep your bin extra clean, we recommend putting a paper towel or napkin at the bottom of the bin before lining it. This helps prevent food or liquid from sticking to the bottom and helps keep the process cleaner.

### **How do I not make it smelly?**

Composting can be a bit smelly. We also recommend securing the lid after putting food scraps into the bin. This will help trap odors in the bin and prevents your kitchen from smelling.

If there are food scraps stuck to the bottom of the bin, this will cause odors and attract bugs. If this is the case, please take a picture and report it to BU Sustainability.

### **Will I have problems with pests (bugs/rodents)?**

The food waste that is going into your compost bin was going into your waste bin before. Although people are frequently concerned about bugs and rodents, we do NOT typically see an increase in pests with the start of a composting program.

If you are having issues, please report the issues to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu).

### **Where is the best place to keep my compost bin?**

We recommend keeping your bin on your counter or under your sink. Keeping it on the counter reminds you to put compost your food scraps. When the bin is tucked away somewhere, it is easier to forget about – which we don't want!

### **Where can I currently compost now on campus?**

If there is not currently compost in your building, unfortunately, you are not able to compost at this time. We are working to improve our infrastructure as quickly as possible and plan to roll out more composting initiatives across campus soon.

**Where do we compost on campus?**

Currently, we have composting at the GSU, CCDS, Breadwinners, and a few more locations on campus.

**Why can't I take my compost to the dining hall or GSU to compost it?**

For health and safety reasons, we can NOT have outside food scraps enter our campus dining facilities.

**How often should I take my compost to the bin?**

At least once per week. If it is full before, then take it out when it is full.

**How often should I clean my compost bin?**

If you are lining your compost bin, you will only need to clean it occasionally. However, if food or liquid gets through the liner, we recommend rinsing it with warm water and dish soap.

You can clean the bin every time it is emptied if you like.

**How do I clean my compost bin?**

With warm water and dish soap.

**Can I decorate my bin?**

No, we reuse the bins every year, so we do not allow them to be decorated.

**Someone stole my bin! What do I do?**

Please report to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu)

**Are there things that I can't put in? (cat litter?)**

The following items cannot be composted:

- NO plastics of any kind, including: cups, lids, straws, tableware, gloves, twist ties or strapping
- NO plastic-coated disposable paper products, such as coffee cups, plates, bowls, frozen food boxes, etc.
- NOTHING waxed or coated cardboard, like butter wrappers
- NO metal of any kind
- NO glass of any kind
- NO Styrofoam or packing peanuts
- NO fabrics, like twine or bandages
- NO hazardous wastes

The list is not all-inclusive. Please see the acceptable list of what should be going into your bin. If you have specific questions, please reach out to [sustainability@bu.edu](mailto:sustainability@bu.edu).