



Going Green

Winter 2014-2015

New Recycling Opportunities at Ingram Street's Recycling Room

Check out the new recycling opportunities that the Green Team is piloting at Ingram Street's reorganized first floor Recycling Room! But before you run to the Recycling Room with your computer mouse and Styrofoam packaging, find out if your mouse can be donated for use with another computer (reuse!) and think of ways to avoid packaging next time (reduce!).

All of the following materials will be collected in separate containers and taken up to the Bings Creek Recycling Centre by our dedicated Facility Maintenance staff:

- styrofoam (but no noodles, chips, peanut packaging, or blue or pink foam board insulation);
- non-laminated glass, mirror glass, and ceramic (e.g., broken mugs or plates);

- plastic bags and outer-wrap (but see picture below for what is acceptable);
- batteries;
- electronics; and
- light bulbs, tubes, and ballasts.

Toner Cartridges are collected in the printing rooms on the 1st and 3rd floors.

To avoid cardboard taking over the Recycling Room, the outdoor cardboard bin (located in the chain-link fenced compound with the large metal bins) can now be easily accessed by all staff with this code: 175.

If you collect a lot of refundables during special events, please make sure that they are placed in a leak proof container before dropping them off in the Recycling Room. The money from the refundables helps to support the CVRD's Youth Outreach Program.

| MATERIAL | DESCRIPTION | NOT ACCEPTED |
|--|---|---|
|  Plastic bags and overwrap | Plastic retail bags for groceries and dry cleaning; bags for bread, newspapers and flyers; pre-washed salad bags; bags for produce and dry bulk foods; frozen vegetable bags; outer wrap for soft drink and can flats; water softener salt, wood pellet and garden product bags; diaper and feminine hygiene product outer bags; overwrap on mattresses, furniture and electronic equipment | No crinkly cellophane wrap, e.g., for tea, floral arrangements No kitchen stretch wrap or plastic wrap for meat, poultry, fish or cheese No chip or snack bags No zipper-lock bags No plastic shipping envelopes No plastic bags labelled biodegradable or compostable No multi-layer, laminated plastic packaging, e.g. for bacon, deli meats, cheese slices, etc. No plastic bubble packaging No lumber or construction wrap No garbage bags (all colours) |



Four Stream Bins – New Recyclable Items Accepted!

Have you noticed that the signs for the four stream bins have been updated? The signs now match the new provincial [Multi Material BC](#) regulation that came into effect in May 2014.

PAPER PACKAGING CONTAINING LIQUIDS WHEN SOLD

ACCEPTED MATERIALS

- Paper cups for hot and cold beverages
- Gable-top cartons for milk, milk-type beverages, cream, substitute eggs
- Aseptic boxes or cartons for milk, milk-type beverages, cream, soup, broth, sauces
- Frozen dessert boxes for ice cream, frozen yogurt, etc.

What's Changed?

The most noticeable change is that take-away coffee cups and gable top containers (e.g., milk, cream, and juice cartons) can now be recycled and therefore should go in the bin for mixed recycling.

Why Is Recycling Gable Top Containers or Take-Away Cups Better than Composting?

The lining on coffee cups and milk cartons is polyethylene film (plastic), which makes

them unsuitable for composting. While it was not possible to recycle them in the past, they are now accepted under MMBC's category for Paper Packaging Containing Liquids When Sold (see [MMBC's full product list](#)).

During the recycling process at the paper mill, the paper fibres are pulped, leaving the polyethylene film as part of the mill's residue stream.

Municipalities within the CVRD are working to update their outreach material and you may still come across dated information where gable-top containers and take-away cups are listed as compostable materials. Hopefully this new information will help you stay on the right recycling path!

Are the CVRD's Coffee Bags Recyclable?

The coffee bags used at the Ingram Street office (black and with a foil liner) are not recyclable; however, they are reusable! Empty bags should be flattened and tucked into the cupboard under the coffee brewing machine. They will be picked up when coffee is delivered, and later will be refilled.

What About the CVRD's Tea Wrappers?

The clear outer wraps for tea bags from the Two Leaves Tea Company are labelled biodegradable, but they are not certified compostable, which is an important label to look for when trying to make the right decision about composting something or not. The clear wrap is made out of Reverte™, which uses resin additives to degrade plastics faster. Plastics incorporating Reverte™ will eventually break down to carbon dioxide and water, but this can take several months or years. It is important to note that biodegradable does not have the same meaning as compostable. Read more about certified compostable labelling below. Plastic products that are labelled biodegradable are not recyclable, so they should be put in the garbage.



Composting the Right Stuff: Hard and Soft Plastic – A Compost Nightmare!

Did you know that it is very difficult if not impossible to screen out small bits of plastic such as bread bag clips and fruit stickers from the finished compost product?



The reason for this is that they weigh and therefore behave the same as small bits of wood and other compostable debris, which unlike plastic is a welcomed material in the composting process. Plastic, including products marketed as biodegradable (e.g., bags and cutlery), do not break down during the three month industrial compost cycle, which results in eye-catching contamination as well as plastic nanoparticles that we cannot see but harm our environment.



Keep Our Compost Clean

Remove all fruit and vegetable stickers, bread bag clips, and other plastic materials. If you are unsure if something is compostable, clean and save the material until you have found more information.



If you feel you need to use a bag to temporarily store your compostables at home, only use paper bags or certified compostable bags that

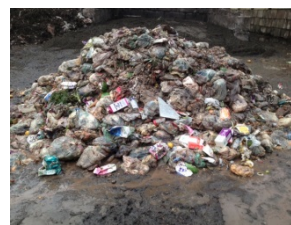
carry one of these two logos, which guarantees that the bags have been tested and are compostable.



Use your head to determine what can be composted. Remember, biodegradable does not mean certified compostable. Your critical thinking skills are key when considering alternative utensils and containers. Unfortunately, there are many

new products on the market that are labelled biodegradable or claim to be compostable.

Always look for the certified compostable logos or play it safe by only using reusable cups, mugs, plates, and cutlery.



Reduce Food Waste

Did you know that the average Canadian household wastes 25% of the food they buy? This is equivalent to buying four bags of food, dropping one in the supermarket parking lot, and not bothering to pick it up. This is a massive waste of not only money, but also water, fuel, and other resources required to grow and get that food to us.

While we think that composting will take care of our wasteful ways, composting facilities are hard to site and expensive to run and regulate, and they often cause odour problems in the community where they are located. In addition, some composting facilities have a hard time selling their final compost product, as local markets may be saturated with readily available compost from other composting facilities.

Here are some ways that you can reduce food waste:

- Only buy what you will have time to cook and eat.
- Make a special container or area in your fridge that says "Eat Me First" to remind you which items are about to expire and need your attention ASAP!
- Remember that expiration dates are only suggestions, and are not to be confused with sell by dates, which are indicators for supermarkets, but are not intended to be guidelines for consumer use.
- For more interesting statistics and tips, keep your eyes peeled for the Green Team's next lunch and learn event.