

# Sustainable Benician

News on Community Recycling & Waste Services



## California Law SB 1383

### Why composting food scraps is good for Benicia and beyond.

California throws away more than 6 million tons of food waste every year. Food waste alone is 17-18 percent of the debris disposed of in California and our landfills are filling up. By putting your food scraps in your greenwaste cart instead of the trash, you are helping reduce disposal in landfills and it also doesn't waste water like a garbage disposal.

Food decomposing in the landfill creates methane gas, which is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide, and contributes to global warming and climate change.\*

The foodwaste collected in your yardwaste cart is turned into compost, which enriches the soil and produces better plants and vegetables. The compost is returned to Benicia and offered free to help recharge your garden and yard.

### Free Compost Giveaway

Saturday, March 19, 9AM to 1PM

**NEW LOCATION!**

Public Parking Lot  
904 W 9th St, Benicia

### Spruce up the soil for your summer garden.

For Benicia Residents only and by appointment for crowd control and safety. When planting your garden, consider planting an extra row for Food is Free Solano or The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

For instructions and to sign up, visit [Calendly.com/recycle1/BeniciaCompostMarch2022](https://calendly.com/recycle1/BeniciaCompostMarch2022)

Have questions? Please contact [MKnutson@RepublicServices.com](mailto:MKnutson@RepublicServices.com)

\*For an update on foodwaste laws and programs for Benicia residents, visit the City of Benicia's website at [www.ci.benicia.ca.us](http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us) or go to [RepublicServices.com/BeniciaCA](https://RepublicServices.com/BeniciaCA). For information on SB 1383, foodwaste statistics, and other CalRecycle Laws, visit [CalRecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp](https://CalRecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp)

## "Tops to Roots" Zero Waste Cooking Class

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 5-6PM

Learn how you can cut back on household food waste, save money and resources, and be part of the climate change solution! Join Stephanie Oelsigle Jordan, Sustainable Solano's Local Food Program Manager, for a cooking class that explores what to do with those beet greens, carrot tops, potato peels and more. Chef Steph will walk through several recipe ideas, discuss meal planning strategies and food expiration dates, and demonstrate a simple vegetable broth made from scraps as well as a seasonal pesto. Information on new food waste laws affecting Benicia will start the class and an audience Q & A will take place at the end.

Sign up at: [EventBrite.com/e/cooking-class-zero-waste-tops-to-roots-tickets-258379759817](https://EventBrite.com/e/cooking-class-zero-waste-tops-to-roots-tickets-258379759817) or visit the event calendar at [SustainableSolano.org](https://SustainableSolano.org)



Earth Day is April 22, 2022  
"Invest In Our Planet" 

Do what you can... Even simple changes can help!



Plastic hybrid products go in the trash.

## Biodegradable or Compostable: What's the difference?

**BIODEGRADABLE:** capable of being decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms

**COMPOSTABLE:** able to breakdown into a mixture of decayed or decaying organic matter used to fertilize soil with no toxicity left in the soil.

Many "Earth Friendly" tableware products claim to be compostable. These products are only accepted in a controlled industrial composting environment. Composting facilities vary, using different methods, so not all facilities accept what some companies market as compostable, including where Benicia's foodwaste and yardwaste will go.

Corn, potato, and sugarcane-based products (Polylactic acid or PLAs) say they are better for the earth, but they contain mostly traditional petroleum-based plastic. They only break down in the landfill a little faster. By mixing natural products with plastic, a hybrid is created that is now difficult to compost and is not 100% plastic, therefore it is no longer acceptable in the recycling cart either. Saying it is biodegradable doesn't help. Everything biodegrades eventually, but that could be 10,000 years in a landfill.

Please put all "compostable" and "biodegradable" single-use utensils and cups in the trash.

— [www.goodstartpackaging.com](http://www.goodstartpackaging.com), Scientific American, Earth Institute of Columbia University, and Republic Services.

## The 2021 Eco Award goes to Valley Fine Foods

Valley Fine Foods is a family-owned manufacturer of innovative and high quality, packaged foods. They have been in business in Benicia since 1992. They began producing filled pastas and sauces with their Pasta Prima™ and ARTISOLA™ brands. Then they refocused their energy on being a leader in innovation across all day parts with the Three Bridges™ product lines starting with Three Bridges Egg Bites, which can be found in retail stores right here in Benicia.

Valley Fine Foods had always taken extraordinary measures to recycle when Catey McCreary, VP of Operations and Amanpreet Brar, the VP of Food Safety & Quality started the Organics Initiative back in 2019. Simon Woods, Director of Manufacturing, increased diversion by working with his team to reduce waste and to act responsibly with the waste that they do have. Innovative changes started in 2021, when Valley Fine Foods began an internal project to rinse and clean out all single use plastics to ensure that they were accepted by the recycling sites. This has increased recycling 15 percent per week. Another great success has been channeling food waste through Republic Services. Approximately 234 cubic yards will be diverted from the landfill each year. This organic waste is composted into soil which is in turn returned to the land.



Photo: (from Left to Right) Valley Fine Foods Waste Handling Team - Simon Woods, Jose Burgos, Oscar Tejada, Maria Barragan, Adontae Dotson, Bartolo Rodrigues, Efrain Solis, Jose Corral and Brandon Lloyd.

Woods said, "Training has been the most important aspect of seeing these improvements through. What I am most proud of has been my team's willingness to live through these changes and to react accordingly when an adjustment was needed."

Woods hopes that his fellow businesses will take a few moments to step back and evaluate what waste they have and their overall impact on the planet. Every little bit counts!

