



Frequently Asked Questions

Food and garden waste collection service

Why are we collecting food waste?

Approximately 20% of the contents in an average household bin is food waste which creates methane gas when landfilled. Methane is a harmful gas which has proven to be a major player in today's climate change problems. This service will allow householders to easily recycle food waste and divert it from landfill. Composting the food will ensure that it becomes a useful product instead of a harmful one.

How will food waste be collected?

Households are provided with a small kitchen caddy, a roll of biodegradable liners and user information. Line the caddy with the biodegradable liner supplied. Fill the caddy with leftover food from the kitchen. When the caddy is full, tie in a knot and place in the brown bin. Please present your brown bin on the kerbside by 7:30 am on the usual day of collection.

If you do not have a brown bin or kitchen caddy and would like to take part in the food waste collection service, please contact the Operational Services Department on (028) 2566 0466 or (028) 2566 0465 or via email Operational.Services@Ballymena.gov.uk

What can I put in the caddy?

It is important that only items requested are placed in the food waste container to ensure quality compost. Please click on the following link for more information on what can go into your caddy and brown bin.

[Materials which can go in the kitchen caddy and brown bin](#)

Don't forget the brown bin can still be used to recycle garden waste such as grass cuttings, weeds, flowers, leaves, small woody waste, prunings and cold ashes.

What happens if I put the wrong items in the caddy?

Contaminated brown bins cannot be collected. A sticker will be left on the bin showing the contaminant. This should be removed before presenting your bin on the next collection day. This is to prevent contamination of the lorry load and rejection by the processor.

What happens when I run out of liners?

Ballymena Borough Council will be providing the biodegradable liners. When you run out of liners simply fit the red tag to the handle of your brown bin and the collection crew will leave you more. When you have received your liners please remember to remove the tag from your brown bin and keep it in a safe place to use the next time you need to request for more.

Do I have to use liners with the caddy?

Not necessarily. Biodegradable liners have been provided for convenience and it is estimated that two will be used per week. You may also use newspaper or kitchen roll which can go directly into the brown bin as they will also decompose.

Can I use any other plastic bags as liners?

No. Please do not use normal plastic or carrier bags as liners, even if they claim to be biodegradable. They will not break down in the composting process and we will be unable to collect your food waste.

Will the caddy smell?

Not if you keep the lid closed. We recommend that you empty your caddy twice a week. The waste should be kept away from radiators and other heating elements. Once the caddy is full the waste should be placed in your brown bin with the lid closed. Keep your caddy clean by rinsing with water or wiping with a kitchen cloth.

Can I put biodegradable bags in my composter?

Yes. But we do not recommend the disposal of cooked food and meat in your home composter as the open bottom may encourage unwanted vermin.

Where does the food and garden waste go?

The garden and food waste collected is taken to a treatment facility where it is processed into compost, avoiding digging peat from Northern Ireland's diminishing bogs and helping to protect a valuable natural asset.

What can I do with excess organic waste that won't fit in the bin?

Excess waste can be taken for composting at the Waveney Road, Civic Amenity Site, Ballymena. Green waste as well as organic kitchen waste can be placed into a home compost bin which can be purchased from the Council's Finance Department. Householders with large gardens could make their own compost heap.

How will this benefit ratepayers?

This service will allow householders to recycle food waste. Diverted food waste will be recycled at a lower cost than if it were sent to landfill.