

# COMPOSTING AT THE UW

## THE NUMBERS

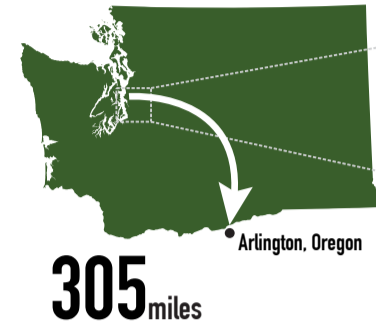
In 2014 we sent 1,912 tons of material to be composted! But we have room to improve: yearly audits of trash from representative campus buildings suggest that approximately 50% of waste we place in trash containers could be composted.



It adds up. Sending compostable waste to the landfill is costs over twice as much as sending it to be composted.



Distance to our landfill in Oregon



Distance to our composting facility in Maple Valley



## WHAT CAN BE COMPOSTED

### FOOD

meat and bones  
fruit and vegetables  
bread, flour, grains  
tea bags, coffee grinds

One of the greatest benefits of composting is that it recycles food nutrients back to the soil rather than locking them away in a landfill.

liquids

**POUR IN DRAIN:** excess moisture inhibits aerobic decomposition

### PAPER PRODUCTS

cups marked "compostable" or "Ecotainer"  
food-soiled paper products  
paper towel from washroom or kitchen  
wooden chopsticks

dairy cartons

**RECYCLE:** plastic coating contaminates compost.

used tissue

paint- or glue-soiled paper

**SEND TO LANDFILL:** Bodily wastes and inorganic materials contaminate compost.

### COMPOSTABLE PLASTICS

clear plastic "Earth Choice" compostable cups  
coffee cup lids marked "Ecotainer"  
Bay Laurel or UW HFS serviceware

The compostable plastic used by HFS and Bay Laurel are all on the list of products approved by our compost vendor Cedar Grove:  
<http://cedar-grove.com/commercial/accepted-items>

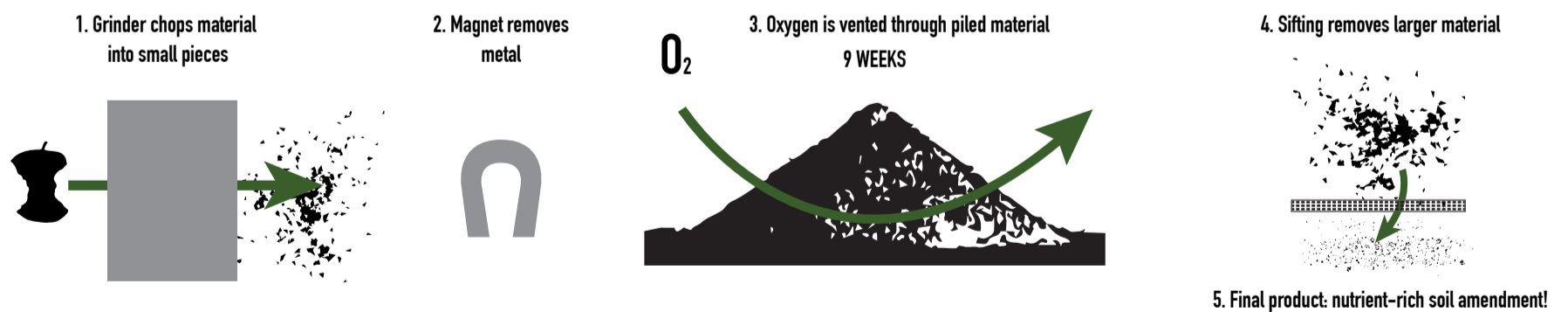
coffee cup lids NOT marked "Ecotainer"

**RECYCLE**

**LANDFILL:** compostable plastics that don't break down in Cedar Grove's compost piles should be sent to the landfill rather than being thrown in recycling where they contaminate the plastic waste stream.

non-approved compostable plastics

## THE COMPOSTING PROCESS



## DEFINITIONS

### COMPOSTABLE ≠ BIODEGRADABLE

To be commercially compostable, an item must break down during the 9 weeks it will spend in the pile. Biodegradable means that an item will ultimately break down through biological means, but it may take more time to do so.

### COMPOSTABLE ≠ COMPOSTABLE

in a commercial facility vs in your home compost pile

Commercial composting facilities create well-regulated conditions and high temperatures that are difficult to replicate at home—so don't expect that compostable fork to disappear in your backyard compost pile.

## LEARN MORE / DO MORE



To get compost bins, or learn more about compost and recycling options for your department, office or residence hall, contact UW Recycling at: 206.685.2811, [recycle@uw.edu](mailto:recycle@uw.edu), or go to their website [www.uwrecycling.com](http://www.uwrecycling.com)

sources of information (created by Marilyn Ostergren, [ostergm@uw.edu](mailto:ostergm@uw.edu)):  
2013 Recycling report <http://www.washington.edu/facilities/building/recyclingandsolidwaste/files/2013report.pdf>  
2013 Trash-in report: [http://www.washington.edu/facilities/building/recyclingandsolidwaste/files/Trash\\_in\\_2013\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.washington.edu/facilities/building/recyclingandsolidwaste/files/Trash_in_2013_Summary.pdf)  
History facts: <http://www.washington.edu/facilities/building/recyclingandsolidwaste/about/history>  
<http://cedar-grove.com/commercial/accepted-items>