

WHAT YOU CAN RECYCLE in CARY

- **METAL** – especially cans, whether steel or aluminum, like soup cans, soda cans. Don't bother tearing off labels.
- **GLASS** – bottles, jars, including wine bottles. Rinse out thoroughly. (Some jars, like peanut butter, may not be worth all the water used in rinsing needed for recycling. Place in garbage unless quite clean.)
- **PAPER AND CARDBOARD** – Includes, but not limited to, junk mail, newspapers, magazines, boxes (like cereal), cardboard (break down boxes if possible), paper rolls from toilet paper or towels, tissue boxes (tear out plastic top opening), brown and white paper bags, Christmas/birthday wrapping paper (not foil paper). Don't include cartons with waxy coatings.
- **PLASTIC** – **here is where it gets complicated!** Don't pay attention to the recycling circles on plastic containers. The Cary facility does not operate on the same system as other places. Pay attention instead to the size and shape of the plastic container. Look for: 1. Jugs, like milk, orange juice, bleach, and detergent (well rinsed). 2. Bottles, both large and small, soda, etc., shampoo and conditioner (well rinsed). 3. Tubs, for yogurt, sour cream, frozen whipped cream, etc. 4. Jars, like for peanut butter, tahini, etc.

IN ALL CASES, BE SURE THE ITEM IS MOSTLY CLEAN.

LEAVE ALL CAPS ON PLASTIC BOTTLES AND TUBS, AND PUT LIDS FOR METAL CANS INSIDE THE CAN.

ALWAYS BE SURE TO LEAVE RECYCLED ITEMS LOOSE IN THE BROWN CART. BAG GARBAGE, BUT NOT RECYCLING.

MORE QUESTIONS? GO TO THE WASTE WIZARD AT:

<https://www.carync.gov/services-publications/garbage-recycling-yard-waste>

This also helps you determine where to take items like electronics, furniture, mattresses, etc.

WHAT YOU SHOULD NOT RECYCLE

The Cary recycling process occurs at a nearby Waste Management site, which is a nationwide firm. Each city, though, could have equipment that varies in size, collection processes that determine what can and can't be put in bins, and different types of conveyor belts. What can be recycled in Chicago, New York or Charlotte may not necessarily work with the Cary system. For example, New Orleans has parking space interference with collection, so individual employees have to lift up the cart and get it to the truck. Therefore, they do not allow glass to be recycled, and do not accept bottle caps and metal can lids because of danger to workers.

THEREFORE, CARY DOES NOT ALLOW THE FOLLOWING:

- Plastic bags. Take these to the outdoor bins at many grocery stores. They will get it to the appropriate agency to turn these bags into things like park benches and water-resistant deck lumber. Reuse your bags.
- Black plastic of any kind, whether plastic garbage bags or black carryout containers. This is one reason not to bag your recycled items.
- Clothing is not accepted for recycling. Wear your clothing longer and buy less of it. Contribute worn items to thrift shops who can resell what is useable still and find agencies who can turn fabric into other uses.
- Nothing smaller than a 3x3 postage note. Small items will fall through the screen at the processing plant, gum up the machinery and cause major headaches on the sorting line.
- Pizza boxes. Although you might separate the clean top from the greasy bottom, to the sorters at the plant they all look the same, and they throw it into trash because any grease from cheese can also affect the machinery. However, pizza boxes can be composted; consult Cary's Waste Wizard for how to do that.
- Once again, don't pay attention to the triangle number on the bottom of plastic containers. Cary does not use that system of sorting. Consider instead the size and shape of the container. No "clam-shell" plastic containers.
- Aluminum Foil or Foil decorative wraps for presents. Foil wrapping paper goes in trash. Aluminum Foil should be fully cleaned and taken to a Cary Convenience center for disposal. Consider buying reusable food covers.

COMPOSTING: WHY AND HOW

WHY: OK, Here's a quick chemistry lesson.

The gases we emit into the atmosphere are responsible for global warming. Some of this is natural, from decaying trees, etc. But nearly 60% of emissions is due to human activity. Most emissions are of two compound gases produced by disintegrating organic material, carbon dioxide and methane. The chemical formula for methane gas is CH_4 ; for carbon dioxide it is CO_2 . Methane releases 25 times the amount of heat into the atmosphere as does carbon dioxide. If methane can be broken down, it should be. Composting accomplishes this.

Anaerobic vs. Aerobic composting: Two kinds of composting are possible. The Anaerobic style uses large swaths of land and buries the organic material in large piles, allowing very little air to get into the decay process. Not much methane is eliminated. Aerobic composting does much better. It requires turning the compost regularly, "airing it out". Or if you want, earthworms will do the work for you ("vermiculture"). Composting can either be at one's home or in larger quantities where machinery can regularly rotate the compost. Many cities, including Cary, use this more effective process. That's why they want your leaves and twigs.

HOW: But we're just one household, what can we do? Some neighborhood HOAs don't allow backyard composting unless 25 feet+ from another property. That effectively eliminates homes with small spaces between houses. However, we can collect organic matter in household containers that eliminate odors. Then use compostable bags (Amazon has dealers for both bags and containers, or use a plastic bucket with a lid) to collect **fruit scraps, paper towels & napkins, vegetable peels, coffee grounds and leftovers off our plates, even meat and bones, practically anything organic**. Then take those bags to a Citizen's Convenience Center.

Notes: no paper towels with cleaning chemicals. Pizza boxes can also compost.

Here's an idea: If the only thing keeping you from composting is the distance to a compost center, check your neighborhood to see if others want to compost. Set up a weekly schedule for volunteers to pick up bags and take them to a Citizens' Convenience Center for disposal. These centers are located on 313 N. Dixon near downtown and at Mills Park off Green Level Church Road in West Cary.

HAPPY COMPOSTING!