

Compost Facilities Survey in North and Central California

The following compost facilities are listed on the CalRecycle map as locations that compost D6400 bags and other various compostable products. The CalRecycle map can be viewed at: <http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory/SearchList/List?FAC=Composting&OPSTAT US=Active®STATUS=Permitted>. There are 171 "composting facilities" listed on the website.

We called the phone number listed for 51 compost facilities and asked via phone, or sent emails. When questioned if they take compostable bags with yard waste, here are the responses. When voicemail message were left it was a friendly request to, "please let me know if you compost my compostable yard waste bags":

Facilities	Yes or no?	Response
Cold Creek Compost, Ukiah	No	"Do they look like plastic? If they do, we do not take them because anything that looks like plastic is taken out so that it isn't put through the grinder."
McCourtney Road Large Volume T.S., Grass Valley	No	LMTC. No return call.
South Lake Resource Recovery and Compost, Clearlake	No	"No we do not take them."
Pacific Wood Recycling Chipping and Grinding, Yuba City	No	"No bags whatsoever".
Feather River Organics, Marysville	No	"We do not take that".
Northern Recycling Compost, Zamora	Assume no	LMTC 4/18/14. No return call.
Upper Valley Disposal Service, Saint Helena	No	"We do not take them or recycle them. Those go to the Clover Flat Landfill."
Central Compost Site, Petaluma	Assume no	LMTC 4/18/14. No return call.
Redwood Landfill, Inc., Novato	No	LMTC. No return call.
City of Napa Composting Facility, Napa		Customer service: "I'm not sure. I'll connect you with Steve, he will know. LMTC with Steve."
Northern Recycling, Napa	Yes	"Yes, we turn it into dirt". However, this claim was negated by a reputable scientist at Cal State University Chico.
Western Placer Waste Mgmt Authority MRF, Lincoln	No	"We do not compost them. It is general refuse at \$12 per cubic yard or \$68 per ton".
Yolo County Central Landfill, Davis	No	"We do not have a composting facility, but will be starting construction for one in June. We

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		take our compost to Napa.”
Lopez Ag, Sacramento	No	Closed. Out of business.
Goodyear Road Compost Facility, Benicia	No	“They take a really long time to break down so we do not take them”.
Recology, Stockton	No	<u>Note:</u> <i>Recology only accepts OMIR certified materials.</i>
Scotts Regional Composting Facility, Linden	No	Busy line: call at (937-644-0011)
Potrero Hills Compost Facility, Inc., Suisun City	No	“We do not take it. It is charged as garbage. The minimum fee is \$53.”
WM Recycling	No	Closed. No longer in operation.
Forward, Inc./Allied Waste North America, Stockton	No	“We are not open to public. Whatever comes in basically gets buried”.
Harvest Power California, LLC. Lathrop	Maybe	"We charge \$28 a ton, minimum of \$10." When asked if they are converted back into compost, she hesitantly replied, "I hope so".
Tracy Material Recovery & T.S., Tracy	Yes; but they go in as garbage.	"Hold on..." then the plant foreman said, "yes we take them. It's \$17 minimum to drop off anything..." Then he admitted, "our compost is all organic, like grass clippings and stuff, the bags just go in as garbage...I know we have to take it". He said they pull them out and send them to the landfill.
Recology, Vacaville	No	“We do not take it, only organic material”. <u>Note:</u> <i>Recology only accepts OMIR certified materials.</i>
Zero Waste to Energy Development, San Jose	Assume no	LMTC 4/18/14. No return call.
Recology Grover Environmental Products, Westley	No	<u>Note:</u> <i>Recology only accepts OMIR certified materials.</i>
Gilton Resource Recovery Facility, Inc., Modesto	Yes; but it is not actually composted	Customer service: “We will take it, but I don’t know if we actually compost them. Let me connect you with the Modesto transfer station”. Transferred call: “I’ve never heard of those bags. At the landfill, they would probably take them for \$30 a load, but not for certain”.
City of Modesto #1	No	Does not have a composting facility at its landfill. Reportedly "not open to the public". If dropped off at the city's facility, "it goes into the trash." Finally got through to Julie "No...not at this time. Call back at 3:30 and I'll ask the boss". LMTC with boss. No return call.

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City of Modesto #2 - Jennings Rd. facility	Maybe	\$20.35 we don't normally take them...only on occasion with yard waste. Cups and utensils have heat ratings and we don't have a high enough heat. The bags usually do, but they have to be mixed real well with the other compost, otherwise they don't. We tried some sausage casings made of sugar and they didn't break down. We can experiment with yours [bags] and see how they do." (it's obvious they don't take in many D4600 bags)
City Of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz	No	Customer service: She had no idea what I was talking about. Transferred me to Mary Simmons who said, "We don't have a commercial composting facility in the City of Santa Cruz. If they came to us, they would be transferred to the landfill."
County Of Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz	Assume no	LMTC 4/18/14. No return call.
Zanker Road Resource Management, Limited, Sunnyvale	No.	"No we don't take them. If they look like plastic, they end up in the landfill. They are considered general refuse".
Mariposa Landfill	Yes; but it is considered trash	"We take them, but it would be considered trash. Every plastic has a charge. Bring it on down and we can give you an estimate".
O.M. Scotts and Sons Company, Linden	No	"I don't know...let me find out." I was told to call back. I did, left a voice mail message and asked a return call. No reply.
Recology, Ripon	No	<u>Note:</u> Recology only accepts OMIR certified materials.
Recology, Westley	No	<u>Note:</u> Recology only accepts OMIR certified materials.
Marysville Valley Composting	Assume no	LMTC. No return call.
UC Davis/Placer County ROT program (this is important as it confirms the utter lack of	No	UC Davis/Placer County ROT program, CA: Kevin, the person in charge of the program, returned the call and said, "the only place I can think of where you <i>might</i> be able to take those bags, with or without compost in them, is the Roseville landfill, which has a very large composting facility. But they have very strict rules on what they will accept." Note: The Roseville landfill was contacted (above) and reported the bags are thrown in the landfill as "general refuse".

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Clover Flat Landfill, Calistoga	doubtful	LMTC. No return call.
Monterey Regional Waste Mgmt. District, Marina	No	"We don't take them for the general public, and I don't think there is a place in our area that does take them".
Keith Day Co.Inc. DBA Gabilan Fertilizer, Salinas	No	"We don't take any bags. Contact a landfill".
Agrothrive Inc., Gonzales	No	"We don't take bags at all".
Central Coast Composting LLC, Watsonville	Yes	"Yes, you can drop them off and we will compost them".
Converted Organics of California, LLC, Gonzales	No	"We do take them, but not at this time. Right now we are dealing with liquids".
Green Valley Recycling, Fresno	No	"No we do not".
Pena`s Recycling And Transfer, Oriso	No	"Most of our plastic is transferred to the landfill. Bring it to us and we will let you know".
Gabilan Fertilizer, Salinas	No	"No, take them to the landfill"
Wood Industries Co., Visalia	Assume no	LMTC 4/18/14.
Tulare County Compost And Biomass, Tulare	No	Customer service did not know. Transferred me to someone else who asked, "do they look like plastic? We don't take them if they do. What happens is when we grind them, the plastic rips into a million pieces and forms confetti. It's hard to work with".
Liberty Composting Inc., Bakersfield	No	"No we don't. They don't break down in time. It takes months and we don't have that kind of time".
Goodrow, Inc. Composting, Templeton	No	"No we don't take them. Compostable bags have been a struggle".
Cold Canyon Landfill, Inc, San Luis Obispo	Assume no	Customer service did not know. LMTC with supervisor. No reply.

Here is a general consensus from our calls:

- Very few facilities are capable of composting "cornstarch compostable bags".
- We talked to receptionists, their bosses, or composting supervisor. Many receptionists did not know (which sends an obvious message), so we were referred to a supervisor.
- Some facilities considered them as contaminants in an organic environment since it is not OMIR certified. This is due to being made of genetically modified (GM) corn (which uses GMOs in a non-sustainable mono-culture farming practice), plus they carry toxins.

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Initial inquiry into sellers of compostable, biodegradable plastics

In a separate inquiry, six sellers (taken off google search on the 1st and 2nd page) of compostable, biodegradable D6400 products were asked if their products would compost in a home composting bin.

Only one of the six, a relatively large west coast seller, replied, "All of our products can compost in a commercial facility. There is too much variation for us to deter[mine] whether or not it can compost in a home facility. Hence, we recommend you try this out on your own to see if it can compost." When asked where I might find a commercial facility, the response was, "We do not have information about specific areas and cities for services that would be available for you. I recommend doing a Google search or referring to your local guides to find the closest composting facility."

In a separate conference with the owner of another very large bio-plastics seller located in the Midwest, he replied that in his metropolitan area (probably the 4-5 largest in the US) there was no facility in the entire region.

It is clear:

- There are very, very few industrial composting facilities in the US that will accept D6400 bags (or products). Only 2 facilities actually said they compost the bags.
- Sellers should not be claiming something is compostable or otherwise, unless there is a realistic, convenient means to do so.
- The sellers of these products are not in compliance with FTC guidelines for marketing claims.