

Food Cycle Prevent. Divert. Compost. Solutions to a Growing Problem



Let us compost for you!

Enroll in the Food Cycle by visiting the Solana Center, purchasing a “Bokashi Kit” with the equipment and supplies you will need to start, and take your bucket to your home or business.

Using your Food Cycle bucket:

- Put 1/4 cup of bran in the bottom of your 5 gallon bucket
- Start adding all your food scraps - keeping out all plastics, metals, other contamination* - and then seal using the airtight lid.
- After you have added about 3 inches of scraps, sprinkle another 1/4 cup of bran, and continue as before.
- Keep adding food scraps and alternating bran, until your 5-gallon bucket is full to the top.
- Bring your full bucket to the Solana Center, and receive another bucket to take back and continue using.

TIP: to get the most out of your bucket, and limit odors, use a masher (like a metal potato masher) to compact the contents of your bucket into a solid layer without air pockets.

TIP: keep liquids out of your bucket; they do not interfere with the composting process, they will make your bucket heavy!

There is an additional \$5 per bucket processing fee for any overflow food that does not fit in the bucket.

We look forward to seeing you at Solana Center on a regular basis!

Best practices:

- Always seal your bucket tightly, and avoid allowing air circulation.
- Consider fitting your bucket with a plate (like a ceramic dinner plate or rigid melamine disc) and using it to seal off the top of your food scraps until it is full to the top. In addition, keeping the plate weighed down with a brick keeps air off your scraps so you can continue to slowly fill with fewer odors.
- Keep your bucket out of direct sunlight; overheating can lead to more odors.

What is Bokashi and why am I adding this bran?

Introducing the inoculated bran (also called “bokashi bran”) into your food scraps adds micro-organisms that effectively “pickle” the discards and start an anaerobic fermentation process. Bokashi’d scraps can be stored and saved for composting at a later time, while limiting odors or molds.

Challenges with your bucket? Troubleshoot using these guidelines.

Issue	Problem	Solution
White molds appears on top of your food discards.	No problem; that is the microbes starting to do their work.	No action necessary.
Colored mold appears – green, blue, red, or black.	Contaminated bucket or too much air in contact with food or too much food and not enough bran.	Stop adding to this bucket; return to Solana Center for clean supplies and begin again.
Lid left off food scraps so gnats/flies are found in bucket.	Lack of keeping bucket closed may have allowed other critters to establish an unappealing home.	No action necessary; if it becomes a problem for you, return to Solana Center for a clean bucket.

*Contamination means: **plastics of any kind** – thin film, small pieces, or hard chips; **moldy bits** = if its green, blue, red, or brown it’s not a beneficial mold; **hard pieces bigger than a golf ball** = things that are solid and more than 1 inch in diameter take more time to decompose; for this program, please limit these items in your buckets.

If you have questions or comments about the Food Cycle program, contact Solana Center at 760-436-7986 x701 or email tori@solanacenter.org