

# UF Organic Waste Diversion



University of Florida

Maintaining the Foundation  
for The Gator Nation!

Physical  
Plant  
Division

## On our way to Zero

2006 UF committed to achieving zero waste and implemented new recycling and waste diversion programs.

2010 Florida Statute 403.7032 created the 75% recycling goal for the State of Florida, with the following benchmarks:

- December 31, 2012 – 40% recycling rate
- December 31, 2014 – 50% recycling rate
- December 31, 2016 – 60% recycling rate
- December 31, 2018 – 70% recycling rate
- December 31, 2020 – 75% recycling rate







**COMPOSTABLE  
MATERIALS ONLY**  
FOOD SCRAPS  
COMPOSTABLE CONTAINERS,  
NAPKINS & PAPER TOWELS

NO PLASTIC OR STYROFOAM

 [RECYCLING.UFL.EDU](http://RECYCLING.UFL.EDU) 





# UF COMPOSTS!

HELP REDUCE LANDFILL WASTE:  
PLEASE DISPOSE OF USED PAPER  
TOWELS IN THE APPROPRIATE BIN.



[RECYCLING.UFL.EDU](http://RECYCLING.UFL.EDU)



Concerns? Contact PPD  
Director at 392-1141  
UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA

## UF COMPOSTS!

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PUSH



# Before





# After





# Questions?

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*Solid Waste Diversion and Recycling*  
**University of Florida** **Physical**  
**Plant**  
**Division**

*Maintaining the Foundation  
for The Gator Nation!*



## **University of Florida Organics Diversion**

The University of Florida made a commitment to move toward Zero Waste in 2006 with the implementation of several new reduction and recycling initiatives. In 2010, the Florida legislature passed a statewide goal to achieve 75% waste diversion by 2020, with strategic benchmarks along the way.

With organics representing about 40% of the municipal waste stream, UF recognized this as the next greatest opportunity for reducing landfill waste. Over the past 3 years, UF has phased in several collection and composting programs for food waste, paper towels, woody waste, greenhouse wastes, and yard waste. In FY 2014-15, we kept nearly 4,112 tons of organics out of the landfill. To date in this fiscal year we have diverted close to 2,912 tons of organics.

**Food Waste** - The first campus programs involved student volunteers with the Sustainability Office helping UF's waste partner separate stadium food waste during home football games, and Gator Dining's (Aramark) composting of food waste from the Reitz Union. While most food waste was taken to a commercial composting facility, a campus student cooperative also demonstrated a number of composting techniques and the use of finished compost in organic gardens.

In 2015, when UF included food waste from Gator Corner, Fresh Food Company, the Racquet Club and a residential dining hall, along with coffee grounds from numerous campus cafés, the volume began to strain the capabilities of our waste partner. At that point UF's Physical Plant Division made the decision to take over the food waste collection. This required investing in new heavy-duty compost carts, dumpsters, compostable liners, and a Bayne bin lift and tipper mounted on the front of UF's front end load refuse truck. It also required revising all the campus waste collection routes for three times per week service, and transporting the organics fifteen miles to the composting facility.

By the end of 2015, UF PPD was collecting food waste from 27 campus dining facilities and some campus events. In 2016 we added the Hare Krishnas who have been serving vegetarian meals on campus to up to 1,500 people daily since 1971. They purchased all-compostable servingware so that all waste goes into one bin with the food scraps. Several sororities joined the food waste composting program in 2016, and we began offering zero waste assistance to other campus events that agreed to switch to compostables.

**Paper Towels** - As PPD phased in campus wide food waste collection, it seemed logical to go after another big organic waste stream – the 500,000 lbs. of paper towels used each year in restrooms in campus buildings. The brown, unbleached towels, made from recycled paper would obviously mix well with food waste to absorb liquids and add a source of carbon.

Several things needed to first happen, including getting third party certification that the towels were compostable, then partnering with UF's custodial crew to aggregate the paper towels from numerous restrooms into special compostable bags. Signage went up in restrooms explaining that we were now composting paper towels from that building. Waste cans in restrooms were labeled "Paper Towels Only" and new mini bins were added bearing "Landfill Trash" labels.

Response was overwhelmingly positive from staff and building users. The small amounts of detected contamination in buildings where food was sold, or in student study areas, were usually resolved by adding a waste or recycling container outside the restroom door, or by adding signage to remind people

to sort. At this time, PPD is collecting paper towels from 88 buildings served by Building Services and in the process of phasing in another 17 buildings.

The large commercial composting facility that processes UF food waste and paper towels, as well as some of our brushy waste, sells a high-quality finished product to farms, landscapers and developers. Some compost comes back to UF to use for improving grounds, gardens and the Gators' Stadium.

**Campus Yard Waste** - Finally, UF is delving into some compost experiments of our own. The 2000 acre UF campus has large tracts of conservation area, as well as landscaped grounds, recreational sports fields, greenhouses, animal bedding, agricultural plots and a lot of trees. In 2015, the PPD completed a pilot project to compost 455 cubic yards of this waste (estimated at 110 tons) and are using the finished product this summer to restore recreation sports fields. We are experimenting with new windrows using an inoculant that reduces the need to turn the row to once per month.