

Separate biowaste correctly: Join in!

Organic bin in residential complexes



Photo: Sarká Pakostová for RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH e. V.

Large quantities of the **valuable raw material “organic waste”** accumulate in residential complexes. Collecting compostable waste is more challenging in such situations, e.g. due to the shared organic waste bin in the inner courtyard and long routes to get there with wet kitchen waste. Unfortunately, this means that far too much organic waste ends up in the residual waste bin as a result.

With its [pilot project “Our organic waste bin. Our energy.”](#) the Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection (SenUVK) wants to work with residents in selected residential complexes to make the organic waste bin more appealing for everyone. The project clarifies [what waste may be disposed of in the organic waste bin](#) and how best to collect this in the kitchen and transport it to the bin site. The approach takes into account the different cultures, languages, values and expectations of the residents.

What many citizens do not know: **organic waste is not “rubbish”**, but valuable raw material in the production of biogas. Around 2/3 of all waste collection vehicles operated by BSR in Berlin already run on this energy. Compost is produced at the same time – a natural fertiliser for agriculture. If organic waste is not carefully separated, processes that occur during the production of biogas will be interrupted, resulting in polluted compost that is useless for agriculture.

A lot of food and organic waste can be avoided entirely: 18 million tons of food* end up in the rubbish each year in Germany – and important resources like water, farmland, fuel and packaging material are wasted along with it. Much of what is thrown away is still edible and healthy, however.

*WWF study, 2015, “Das große Wegschmeißen”

The pilot project

Although there is great potential for the collection of organic waste in residential complexes, the organic waste bin is unfortunately not used properly or not at all for various reasons.

With its pilot project “**Our organic waste bin. Our energy.**”, the Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection (SenUVK) wants to convince residents living in large residential complexes of the benefits of the organic waste bin.

The initial campaign days for the pilot project took place from June 2019 to February 2020 in a residential complex on Naunynstraße in Berlin’s Kreuzberg district, in cooperation with the housing company degewo, and in a residential complex on Platz der Vereinten Nationen in Friedrichshain, supported by the Berlin-Mitte Housing Association (WBM).

The aim of the pilot project was to test the various measures and communication channels that lead to an improvement in the quantity and quality of the collected organic waste and other recyclable materials.

Campaigns and dates 2021

The pilot project “Our organic waste bin. Our energy.” is being continued and expanded in partnership with RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH e. V. and Yesil Çember – ökologisch interkulturell gGmbH.

More than 5,000 households in the Berlin districts of Mitte, Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg are being brought into the project during the 2020/2021 campaigns. Multilingual waste consultation remains an important element of the campaigns. Residents can take part in an ideas competition and will be given tips on how to avoid food waste.

You can find all dates and locations [here](#).

Questions

If you have any questions about the pilot project, please contact us by email at: zero-waste@SenUVK.berlin.de

If you have questions about waste disposal, please contact the BSR Service-Center by telephone: +49 (0)30 7592 4900.

Campaign dates

Info days



Photo: Joris Felix Patzschke for RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH e. V.

The pilot project “Our organic waste bin. Our energy.” is being continued and expanded in partnership with RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH e. V. and Yesil Çember – ökologisch interkulturell gGmbH:

RESTLOS Rad, the mobile bike kitchen from RESTLOS GLÜCKLICH, is on tour through the city. This is used for cooking and eating together, and you will learn helpful tips on reducing your food waste. The team from Yesil Çember also provides advice on sustainable waste sorting.

Residents will be given tips on how to properly collect, separate and dispose of organic waste and other recyclable materials, as well as on how to avoid waste. Waste consultations will be carried out not only in German, but also in Turkish and Arabic. You can find the campaign flyer [here](#).

Campaigns and dates:

Date	Time	Location
02/06/2021	10:30am - 1:30pm	Info booth at the weekly market at Spittelmarkt Leipziger Str. 54, 10117 Berlin
03/06/2021	10:00am - 1:00pm	Info booth Berolinastr. 15, 10178 Berlin
09/06/2021	2:30pm - 5:30pm	Info booth (near playground) Lichtenberger Str. 8, 10178 Berlin
26/06/2021	2:00pm - 6:00pm	Event booth at „KO-Markt“, Haus der Statistik Otto-Braun-Straße 70-72, 10178 Berlin

Further dates to follow. Participation is free. Booking not required.

What goes in the organic waste bin?

Many Berliners don't know exactly what kitchen waste can be put in the organic waste bin: food scraps or spoiled food from the refrigerator, including packaging, are often mistakenly thrown into the residual waste bin. But it is precisely this calorie-rich kitchen waste and food leftovers that are full of energy and produce a great deal of biogas in the fermentation plant.

Below you will find an exact list of the waste that is allowed in the organic waste bin and the waste that should not be thrown into the organic waste bin:

What's allowed in the organic waste bin	What's NOT allowed in the organic waste bin
Shells and remains of fruit (including citrus fruit), vegetables and eggs	Plastics, packaging, films, bags
Food leftovers (including cooked)	Metals, aluminium foil, cans
Tea and coffee filters, tea leaves and coffee grounds	Sanitary products, nappies, vacuum cleaner bags
Spoiled food from the fridge (but without packaging!)	Medicines
Kitchen roll	Textiles and leather
Plant waste	Cat/small animal litter
	Cigarettes and ashes
	Earth, sand, gravel, stones

Tips for the simple and practical collection of organic waste in the kitchen:

- Wrap very moist kitchen waste in paper.
- Paper bags filled with kitchen waste are permitted in the organic waste bin. Use a layer of newspaper at the bottom of the paper bags to reinforce them for carrying to the organic waste bin.
- Collect organic waste in tightly sealable containers and ideally empty them every 2-3 days. Residents of the residential complexes involved in the pilot project will receive a starter set consisting of a pre-sorting container from the BSR and paper bags as a thank you for their participation from the information stands located in the complexes. More information can be found [here](#).
- Not permitted: plastic, glass and metal as well as large amounts of paper are not allowed in the organic waste bin. They interrupt the fermentation process to biogas and contaminate the compost for agriculture. This also includes bags made of biodegradable (compostable) plastics.

Tips for the disposal of organic waste at the bin site:

- Dispose of your paper bags filled with organic waste directly in the organic waste bin.
- Always keep the lid of the organic waste bin closed to prevent odours and vermin.
- Always leave the bin site as you would like to find it. This makes it easier for you and your neighbours to use the bins together.

Further information on the collection of organic waste can be found at [BSR: organic material](#). You can also find short explanatory films under the #BioTrennt hashtag on the BSR YouTube channel.

Further sorting instructions: what other waste needs to be disposed of separately?

On the website of Berliner Stadtreinigung (BSR) you will find detailed information on separate collection. Visit the section "[Disposal and Recycling](#)" to find out in detail what you can dispose of and how.

Waste glass

Waste glass can be recycled and should therefore be placed in the glass recycling containers on public roads. Please always dispose of white glass and coloured glass separately in the appropriate containers – this is important for the subsequent recycling process. It is not necessary to rinse jars and bottles.

What's allowed in the glass bottle bank:

- Bottles, e.g. for juice, wine, vinegar
- Jars, e.g. for jam or baby food
- Preserving jars
- Glass packaging
- Perfume bottles
- Medicine bottles

What's NOT allowed in the glass bottle bank:

- Incandescent bulbs or energy-saving bulbs
- Crockery, porcelain and ceramics
- Window glass or mirror shards
- Crystal glasses

Waste paper

Properly separated, waste paper helps to conserve natural resources such as wood and water. In Berlin alone, the separate collection and recycling of cardboard and paper saves more wood each year than the Grunewald forest could produce.

What's allowed in the paper recycling bin:

- Newspapers, magazines, cartons, cardboard
- Paper packaging
- Brochures, catalogues
- Books, notebooks, writing paper

What's NOT allowed in the paper recycling bin:

- Wallpaper remnants
- Dirty paper
- Coated paper (wax, graphic or photo paper)
- Carbon paper

General recycling bin

The general recycling bin is used for packaging and other objects made of metal, plastic or composite materials. In Berlin, the general recycling bins are yellow or orange. The same items may be disposed of in both.

What's allowed in the general recycling bin:

- Pots, e.g. for yoghurt, margarine
- Plastic bottles, e.g. for care products, washing up liquid and laundry detergents
- Everyday items, e.g. watering cans, plastic bowls, toys
- Films, e.g. cling wrap, plastic bags
- Foam materials, e.g. polystyrene shells for foodstuffs
- Beverage cans, food cans, bottle closures
- Pots, tools, cutlery, screws
- Aluminium foils, lids and trays
- Beverage cartons

What's NOT allowed in the general recycling bin:

- Electrical appliances
- Energy-saving bulbs
- Batteries
- Textiles
- Data media
- Wood
- Paper
- Glass
- Harmful substances

Electrical appliances

Electrical appliances are accepted free of charge at all BSR recycling sites. It is also possible to arrange collection of electrical appliances in combination with a bulky waste collection. Small electrical appliances can also be dropped off at some DIY stores. Further information can be found [here](#).

Bulky waste

Used furniture is not rubbish. If your used goods are still in good condition, you can also give them away instead of throwing them away. You can find institutions that will be happy to pass your well-maintained items onto grateful recipients [here](#). As part of the Re-Use Berlin initiative, various campaigns to promote the reuse of used goods are also taking place this year. Further information about Re-Use Berlin can be found [here](#).

BSR accepts unusable items at its recycling sites; those measuring up to 3 cubic metres are even free of charge. For even more convenience, you can book a BSR bulky waste collection service (subject to a fee).

This is what can be included in a bulky waste collection:

- Dismantled large and small furniture
- Carpets, mattresses
- Scrap, such as old bicycles, prams, etc.
- Laminate, door frames, doors, window frames without glass
- Plastic parts such as pipes, cisterns and bathtubs
- Electrical appliances
- Old textiles (in bags)
- Renovation waste (in sacks or cartons)

This is what CANNOT be included in a bulky waste collection:

- Construction waste
- Cast bathtubs
- Car tyres and batteries
- Harmful substances such as paint or varnish

Household rubbish

Household waste includes all waste that cannot be recycled or can only be recycled at great expense.

What's allowed in the grey bin:

- Sanitary products, nappies, animal litter
- Crockery, mirror and window glass
- Vacuum cleaner bags and rubbish (sweepings)
- Dirty or coated papers, film, photos
- Wallpaper remnants, dried paints
- Cigarettes and ashes

What's NOT allowed in the grey waste bin:

- Plastics, metals and composites (recycling bin)
- Glasses, bottles (waste glass containers)
- Paper, cardboard (paper recycling bin)
- Fruit and food leftovers, coffee grounds (organic waste bin)
- Batteries (harmful materials collection points)
- Electrical appliances
- Harmful substances
- Building rubble
- Bulky waste

Harmful substances

Residues of paint, solvents and chemicals or old batteries contain dangerous substances. If they are carelessly thrown away, they will pollute the environment. They must therefore be collected separately and disposed of properly. BSR has set up harmful substance collection points at six of its 15 recycling sites in Berlin for this purpose.

These harmful materials MUST be disposed of separately:

- Paints, varnishes, solvents
- Old medication
- Contaminated floors and soils
- Household and car batteries
- Caustic solutions and acids
- Aerosol cans

There are collection points for harmful substances at these recycling sites near you:

- [Recyclinghof Gradestraße](#), Gradestraße 77, 12347 Berlin (Neukölln)
- [Recyclinghof Nordring](#), Nordring 5, 12681 Berlin (Marzahn-Hellersdorf)