environment LA SANITATION
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

HOME COMPOSTING

Municipal Solid Waste Overview

In 1989, California adopted Assembly Bill (AB) 939, which required each jurisdiction to reduce waste by 25% by 1995, and by 50% by the year 2000.

LASAN's green (and blue) bin recycling programs reduce waste by diverting materials from landfills.

HOME COMPOSTING

WHY DOES THE CITY PROMOTE COMPOSTING?

The City of Los Angeles achieved 76.4% diversion in the year 2011:

Mulching/Composting

493,000 tons

Curbside Recycling

202,000 tons

The City is working toward a diversion goal of 90% by 2025.

California legislation REQUIRES organics recycling.

HOME COMPOSTING

WHY DOES THE CITY PROMOTE COMPOSTING?

COMPOSTING:

Diverts valuable materials from landfills

Is cost-effective

Reduces pollution:
processing materials in your backyard or apartment avoids hauling this material by truck.

HOME COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic material.

Organic Material is:

Plant and animal material and waste.

HOME COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Origins of Composting

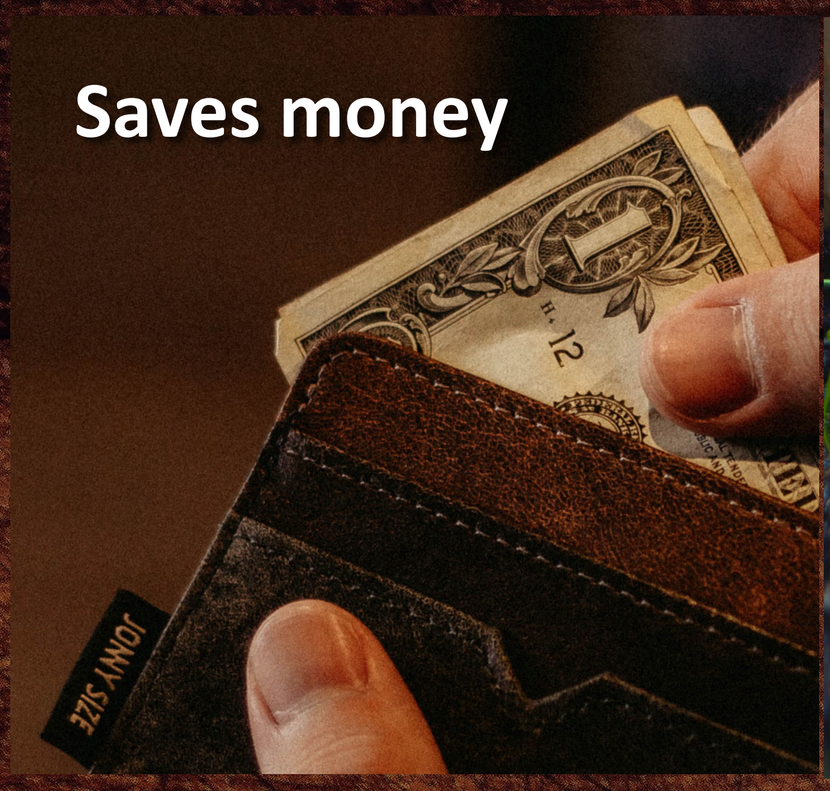
At the Tigris & Euphrates rivers
about 10,000 years ago
(Mesolithic era)

In Scotland & Northern China
6,000 BC

The Greeks, Egyptians and Romans Buried agricultural waste & Animal manure in cultivated fields.
800 BC

HOME COMPOSTING

WHY SHOULD I COMPOST?



HOME COMPOSTING

COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS

GREENS

Nitrogen

- All-paper Coffee Filters
- All-paper Tea Bags

Caution: Some "Mesh" or Woven" tea bags are polyester, not paper

- Coffee Grounds
- Egg Shells
- Fruit peels
- Vegetable Trimmings
- Grass/Yard Clippings
- Livestock Manure

BROWNS

Carbon

- Chopped Cornstalks
- Dried Leaves
- Sawdust
- Straw Bedding
- Wood Chips
- Paper Towels
- Shredded Cardboard
- Shredded Paper

HOME COMPOSTING

NON-COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS

DO NOT COMPOST THESE ITEMS AT HOME

- Bones
- Dairy
- Fatty Foods
- Oil
- Grease
- Meat
- Diseased Plants
- Treated Wood
- Weed Seeds
- Dog or Cat Feces

HOME COMPOSTING

COMMON METHODS OF COMPOSTING

Slow & Cold
(Continuous Composting)

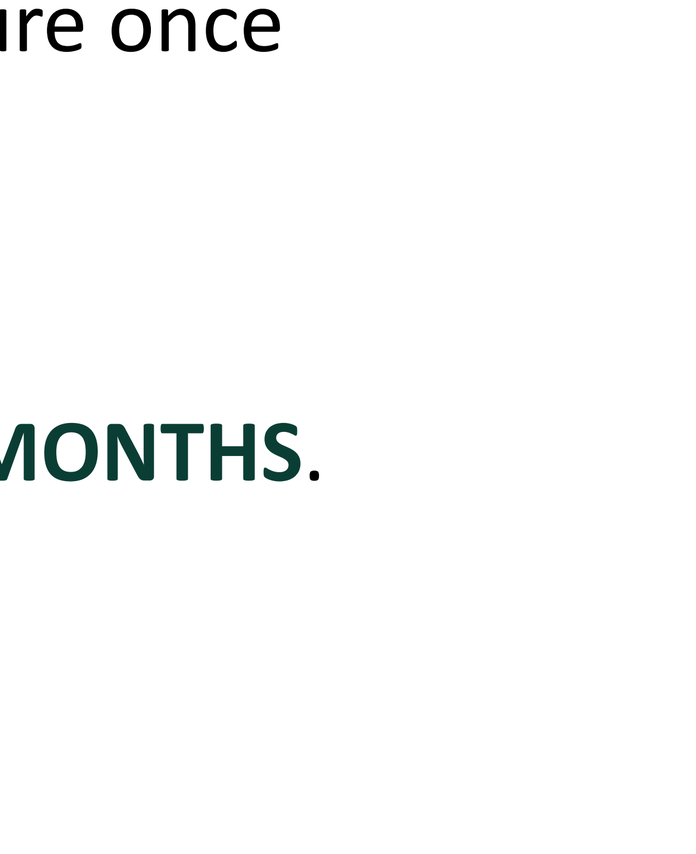
Fast & Hot
(Batch Composting)

HOME COMPOSTING

COMMON METHODS OF COMPOSTING

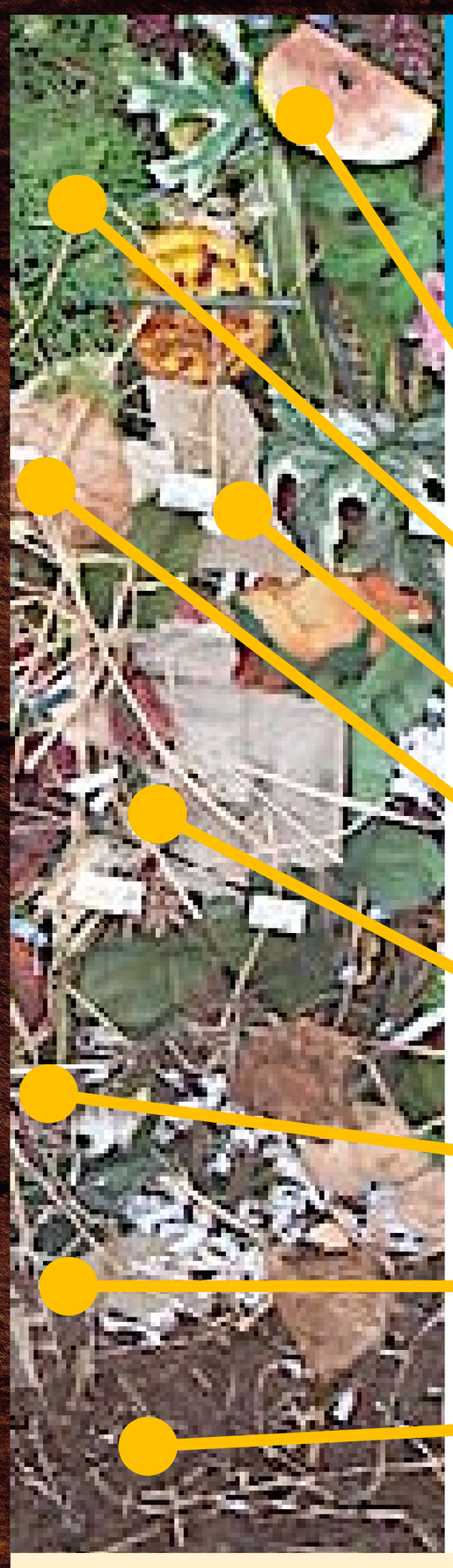
Slow & Cold Continuous Composting

- Continuous Process (versus ”Batch” Process).
- You should mix and check moisture once every two weeks.
- Less work!
- Convenient.
- Produces finished compost in **6 MONTHS**.



HOME COMPOSTING

COMMON METHODS OF COMPOSTING



CUTAWAY
Slow & Cold Composting

- **Vegetable Trimmings/ Fruit peels**
- **Grass Clippings**
- **Wood Chips & Sawdust**
- **Leaves**
- **Worms**
- **Moisture**
- **Shredded Newspaper & Cardboard***
- **Bacteria**

*** Cardboard.** *Per the Sierra Club's Mr. Green: "Check to see if the cardboard has any printing. You want to be sure it has only black ink. Most black inks are made from soybean oil. Avoid using cardboard or paper for compost if it contains colored ink, this ink may contain some toxic heavy metals. Of course, if your cardboard is more than merely dirty and has absorbed oil or other chemicals, it should probably not be used."*

HOME COMPOSTING

COMMON METHODS OF COMPOSTING

Hot & Fast Batch Composting

- This is a **batch** versus a continuous process.
- Composts a higher volume of material than cold composting.
- All ingredients must be place in bin at once.
- The pile temperature is about 140° F.
- Must turn once a week.
- Must check moisture weekly.
- More space is required.
- More work is required!
- Produces finished compost in **6 weeks.**

HOME COMPOSTING

COMMON METHODS OF COMPOSTING

CUTAWAY
Fast & Hot Composting

- **Vegetable Trimmings/ Fruit peels**
- **Grass Clippings**
- **Wood Chips & Sawdust**
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HOME COMPOSTING

WHAT IS THE PROPER MIX?

What keeps a compost pile active?

- **Proper aeration**
- **Proper mix of green and brown material**
- **Proper moisture content**

***Volume, not weight.**
(A varied mix of green and brown materials is the most effective.)

HOME COMPOSTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What size should my materials be?

Twigs, leaves, food scraps, etc. shouldn't be larger than your pinky finger.

This is because smaller pieces decompose faster.

How moist should my compost be?

Maintain a moisture level similar to a wrung-out sponge.

HOME COMPOSTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will my compost bin attract mice, rats, flies and other animals?

Pests are attracted by high-fat and protein foods (meat, oil, cheese, fish & chicken); do not compost these.

Bury any vegetable scraps/ fruit peels under other material in the bin to mask odors.

HOME COMPOSTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where is the best location for my bin?

Equal amounts of shade and sunlight:

- *Beach locations need more sunlight.*
- *Valley locations require more shade.*

On dirt:

The contents of a compost bin will stain concrete, brick and other paved surfaces.

HOME COMPOSTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Will the pile smell bad?

Not if you do the following:

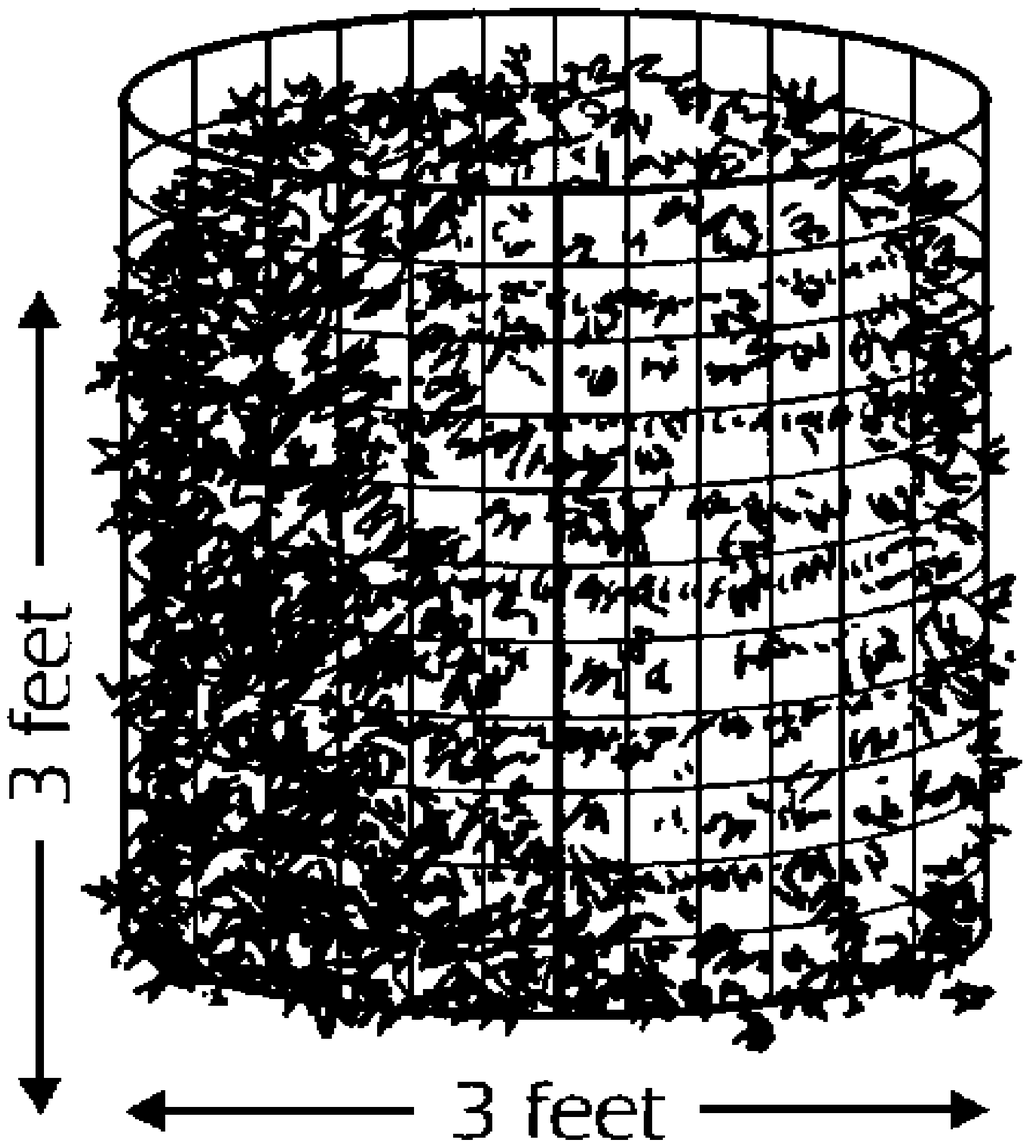
1. Maintain proper moisture levels.
2. Turn the pile often to aerate it.
3. Keep the composting process <u>aerobic</u> (with oxygen versus <u>anaerobic</u> (without oxygen).

HOME COMPOSTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I make my own Compost Bin?

Yes, see LASAN's "Your Guide to Home Composting– Save the Planet in Your Own Backyard!"



HOME COMPOSTING

COMPOST USES

MULCH

Spread a layer 3 – 5 inches thick around plants and on bare soil to:

- ***Prevent soil erosion.***
- ***Conserve water.***
- ***Control weed growth.***

HOME COMPOSTING

COMPOST USES

SOIL CONDITIONER

Mix 6 inches of compost into soil when starting:

- ***Flower beds.***
- ***Vegetable gardens.***
- ***Planting new trees and shrubs.***

HOME COMPOSTING

COMPOST USES

OUTDOOR POTTING MIX

Sift the compost through a ¼ inch screen then mix 2 parts compost with:

- ***1 part sand.***
- ***1 part vermiculite.***

HOME COMPOSTING

VERMICOMPOSTING
(Worm Composting)

What type of worms do you use?

Red wigglers, also known as Brandling or manure worms. These can be purchased online or at a bait, tackle or fishing store.

How often do they reproduce?

Red wigglers can double their population every 90 days.

HOME COMPOSTING

VERMICOMPOSTING
(Worm Composting)

What worms don’t like:
- Light
- Vibrations
- Abrupt Movements

What do they eat?
Fruit rinds, cores, peels; grains; egg shells; coffee grounds; all-paper coffee filters and all-paper tea bags; dried leaves; and shredded paper.

How often do you feed them?
Once a week.

What do I need to Start?
1. Bin
2. Worms
3. Shredded Paper
4. Egg Shells
5. Moisture
6. Food Source

HOME COMPOSTING

What is Grasscycling?

Grasscycling is the practice of leaving grass clippings on a lawn after mowing.

What are the Benefits?

- As the grass clippings decompose, they provide nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium and moisture to the soil.
- They contribute to the organic content of the soil, which can promote healthy microbial activity and improve soil structure, leading to better water and air circulation.
- Reduces the need for fertilizer.
- Saves time and labor.

What are the Cautions?

- Avoid grasscycling excessive amounts of clippings, particularly from tall grass, to avoid thatch buildup on your lawn.
- Avoid grasscycling wet grass clippings (after rain or watering). This can lead to fungal growth and can smother your lawn.

HOME COMPOSTING

What is Xeriscaping?

Xeriscaping is a method of landscaping focused on water conservation; xeriscapes use little to no water and are suited for hotter, drier climates, such as Southern California's.

Common elements:

- Woodchips or gravel instead of a lawn (grass).
- Plants native to your area. Our natives include: Sage, Coyote Bush, and Deer Grass.

What are the Benefits?

- Improves the condition of soil (drainage and nutrients) to support healthier plants.
- Provides food and shelter for native insects, birds, and other animals.
- The deep root systems help prevent erosion.

HOME COMPOSTING

What is Drip Irrigation?

A drip irrigation system can be a simple DIY setup using a timer and a soaker hose, or a more complex design with drip tubing, emitters, and risers to precisely control water delivery.

Drip irrigation is ideal for Xeriscapes.

In Los Angeles, drip irrigation can be used for subsurface irrigation for landscapes.

- The point of discharge (such as an emitter) must be covered by a minimum of 2-inches of soil or mulch.

HOME COMPOSTING

What is a Graywater System?

Graywater is untreated wastewater from showers, laundry machines, and bathtubs that has not come into contact with toilet waste. (Graywater does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks, photo lab sinks, dishwashers, or laundry water from soiled diapers.)

Using graywater reduces potable water consumption.

Graywater shall not be used in spray irrigation, allowed to pond or runoff and shall not be discharged directly into or reach any storm sewer system or any surface body of water.

Graywater shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts of food crops that touch the soil.

Gray water systems are managed by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS), which oversees permits and compliance with the city's plumbing code:

P/PC 2023-012

INFORMATION BULLETIN / PLUMBING.
REFERENCE NO.: LAPC 1503.0
DOCUMENT NO.: P/PC 2023-012
Previously Issued as: P/PC 2020-012
Effective: 01-01-2023
Revised:

GRAY WATER SYSTEMS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

A. GRAY WATER SYSTEMS

Under the State regulations, gray water is defined as untreated wastewater that has not been contaminated by any toilet discharge, has not been affected by infectious, contaminated, or unhealthy bodily wastes, and does not present a threat from contamination by unhealthy processing, manufacturing, or operating wastes. Gray water includes but is not limited to, wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, clothes washing machines, and laundry tubs, but does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers.

A gray water system is designed to collect gray water on site for reuse or distribution to an irrigation or disposal field. A gray water system may include on-site treated nonpotable water devices or equipment, tanks, valves, filters, pumps or other appurtenances along with piping and receiving landscape. Gray water shall not be used in spray irrigation, allowed to pond or runoff and shall not be discharged directly into or reach any storm water system or any surface body of water, and shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts of food crops that touch the soil.

HOME COMPOSTING

All About Artificial Turf

- It's made primarily from plastic (which is derived from fossil fuels) and other materials; can't easily be recycled.
- It can leach PFAS ("forever" chemicals), heavy metals, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- It's designed for rapid drainage, which can result in greater runoff compared to natural grass. Runoff can carry microplastics into storm drains, streets and then the ocean.
- It absorbs heat, creating a very hot surface; can pose risks of burns and heatstroke.
- Its use was encouraged a decade ago: A 2015 California law allowed the use of artificial grass to conserve water. But a 2023 law allows local agencies to ban it due to health and environmental concerns.
- LADWP does not issue rebates for artificial turf under its turf replacement program.

HOME COMPOSTING

California AB 1572

California's Assembly Bill 1572, signed into law in October 2023, prohibits the use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional turf on certain public, commercial, institutional, industrial, and homeowners association (HOA) properties.

What is Nonfunctional Turf?	What is Functional Turf?
▪ Decorative grass areas that serve only an aesthetic purpose. ▪ Examples include grass on road medians, in front of businesses, or in HOA common areas that are not used for play or gatherings.	▪ Grass used for recreation, sports, or community events. ▪ Areas like sports fields, school fields, parks, and cemeteries are considered functional and are exempt from the ban. ▪ Individual residential lawns are also exempt from this prohibition.

Key Compliance Dates:

- January 1, 2027: State and local government properties.
- January 1, 2028: Commercial, industrial, and institutional properties.
- January 1, 2029: Common areas of homeowners associations (HOAs).
- January 1, 2031: Government facilities in disadvantaged communities.

Why Was the Law Passed?

- To promote water efficiency and preserve California's water supply.
- To align with state policies on climate change, water conservation, and reducing reliance on the Sacramento-SanJoaquin Delta ecosystem.
- Some local water districts offer a rebate for replacing non-functional turf with sustainable, drought tolerant landscaping. To receive rebate, applicants need a plan to retain stormwater (swales, dry streambeds) and have some water-efficient plants.

HOME COMPOSTING

FOOD WASTE IN THE UNITED STATES

40% OF ALL FOOD IN THE US IS WASTED

ESTIMATED VALUE OF LOST FOOD

$162 BILLION PER YEAR

FOOD INSECURITY

Not having reliable access to sufficient, affordable, nutritious food.

140 MILLION struggle with **hunger** in the United States.

4.6 MILLION people in California face **food insecurity**.

1.2 MILLION Los Angeles County has the **most** food insecure residents in the US

ON AVERAGE, EVERY AMERICAN WASTES

290 POUNDS OF FOOD PER YEAR

Which Generates

4 POUNDS OF METHANE

METHANE IS 21 TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE as a greenhouse gas than

CO_2

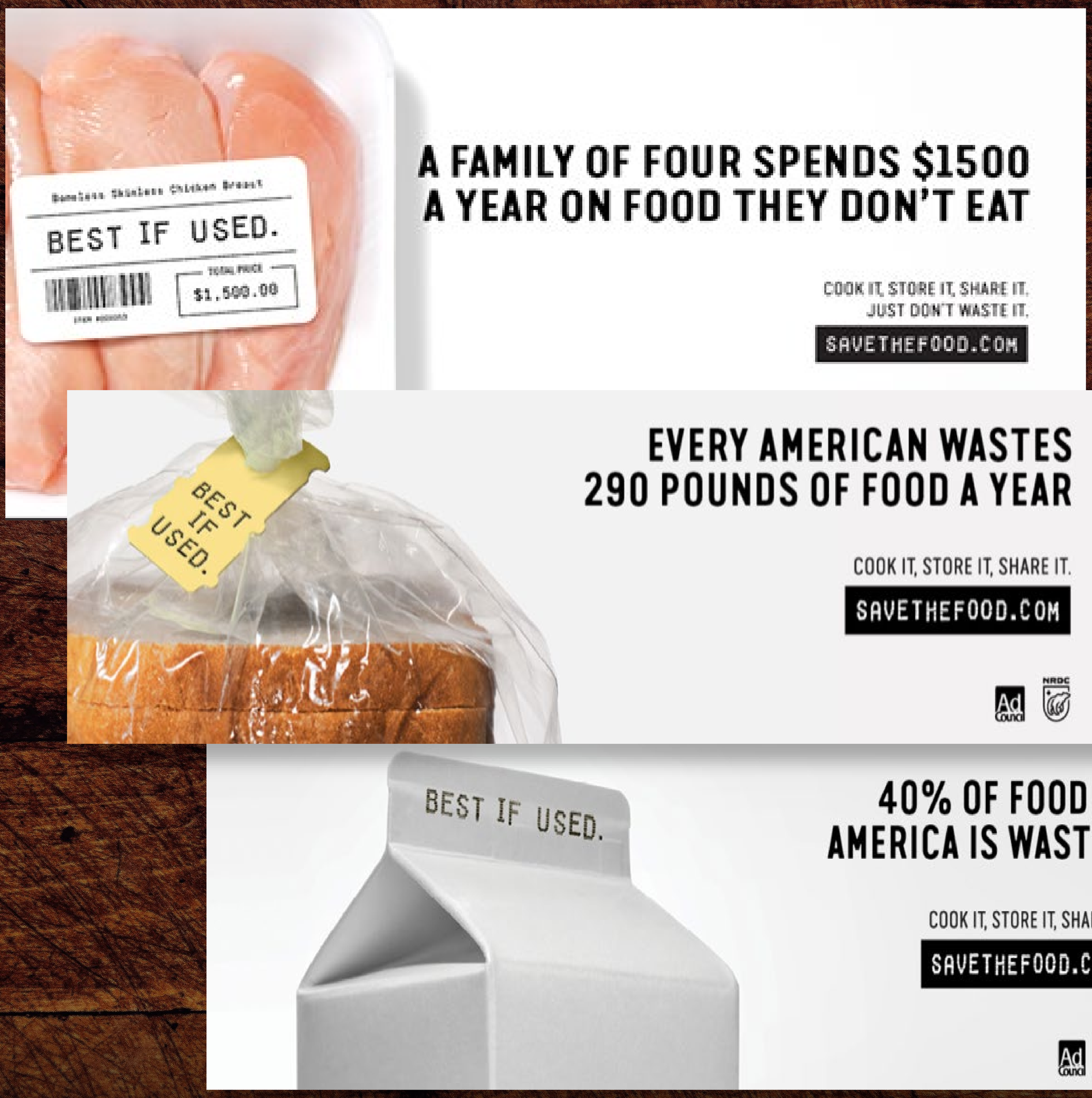
Equivalent to

DRIVING 75 MILES in a standard passenger car

HOME COMPOSTING

SAVE THE FOOD

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and The Ad Council created the Save the Food campaign to educate about food waste.



HOME COMPOSTING

FOOD RESCUE GROUPS

Food Rescue Groups collect edible food and distribute it to hungry people via food banks, food pantries and homeless shelters, etc.

The recycLA franchise program <u>requires</u> its service providers to support food rescue.

BeaconHouse Association of San Pedro

Central City Community Outreach

DREAMCENTER

Community Outreach Center

Food Forward

FOODCYCLE LA

Heart of Compassion Distribution

Food Finders
Rescuing Food, Reducing Hunger

LA COMPOST

Los Angeles Food Policy Council

ONEgeneration
Share the Care℠

LA Conservation Corps
Transforming Youth. Enhancing Communities.

Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
Fighting Hunger. Giving Hope.

Meet Each Need With Dignity
MEND

The Salvation Army

St. Francis Center
Serving Hope

Pacoima Beautiful

San Fernando Valley Rescue Mission
An Outreach Ministry of Rescue Mission Alliance

UCLA Foundation

world harvest
Sharing the Surplus

West Valley Food Pantry

HOME COMPOSTING

FOOD RESCUE THROUGH A

Total Tons of Food Rescued (in tons)

2025 (to date)

JAN 886.59	**FEB** 1,005.80
MAR 1,047.08	**APR** 961.27
MAY 970.42	**JUN** 1,090.26
JUL 1,245.16	**AUG** 855.19
SEP 1,042.57	**OCT** 1057.40
Total 10,161 tons	

2018 - 2025

51,653.39 tons

86 million meals
(1.2 lbs. per meal per US Dept. of Agriculture)

FOOD RESCUE GROUPS
(FRGs)

Read more about some FRGs, and food waste in general, at the **City of Los Angeles Sanitation** website:

Lacitysan.org/organics

environment LASANITATION
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

HOME COMPOSTING

QUESTIONS?

Solid Resources
Citywide Recycling Division

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DECEMBER 2025