

Be a Grocery Detective

Have you ever wondered what all those numbers are on your fruit and vegetable stickers?

The numbers let you know how the produce is grown, whether it's **organic** or **conventional**.

- If it starts with a 3 or a 4, it's **conventional** produce
- If it starts with a 9, it's **organic** and grown without chemical pesticides or fertilizers.

Next time you're at the grocery store, you can help your grown-ups tell the difference!

Draw the fruits and their numbers in the space above (we started with an onion!) and email Authority@RecycleSmart.org to show off your drawings. Be sure you put stickers in the trash, they can't compost.



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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Reflections on recycling from our Director
- A checklist for green events
- Tips for avoiding compost gloop!



Local teens in the enviro scene

Have you noticed a sign reminding you not to idle in your car? You can thank Project Earth!

Project Earth is Raini Chugh, David Siu, and Lauren Brekke. These three started their environmental advocacy as third graders at Burton Valley Elementary. They developed the No Idling Project, which aimed to improve air quality, prevent noise pollution, and reduce fossil fuel use in Lafayette. Their efforts were successful and the City adopted a "No Idling" resolution! To celebrate, the team created permanent no-idling signs for local parking lots.

In middle school, they supported the school district's first-ever sustainability plan. Now that Raini, David, and Lauren are in high school, they are continuing to inform the community about protecting the environment. Project Earth encourages businesses to move away from single use plastics. With a state-wide plastic bag ban coming into effect in January 2026, they're helping determine how this will look for the city of Lafayette. Project Earth is on the case, with plans to update residents about the changes. We'll stay tuned, Project Earth, and thank you for your action!

Reality Recycling

We know recycling and composting looks a little different in apts and condos, and we're eager to hear how you do it! We're inviting residents who want to practice better composting and recycling habits to partner with us. Throughout the year we'll share your journey, your tips, and provide you with tailored advice to be your RecycleSmart-est self.

Email us at Authority@RecycleSmart.org with the subject line "Recycle Smarter," and let us know why you want to work with us. You'll be the best-informed and most prepared unit in your complex!

Hello 🗋️ I'm a talking recycling bin! Scan the QR code or text me at 925-940-5795 and I'll tell you which bin it goes in.



PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
CONCORD, CA
PERMIT NO. 99



APARTMENTS AND CONDOS EDITION

Spring clean your fridge!

Spring's the time to clear clutter from our closets, deep clean the bathrooms, and make our living rooms livable again. But what about the kitchen? Particularly, what about the fridge? When you keep your fridge tidy, it can help save money and prevent food waste!

Sometimes the fridge feels less like food storage and more like a morgue—full of expired yogurt containers, wilted vegetables, and mystery containers from months ago. Tackling it all might feel overwhelming, but don't fear: We've got tips to help you spring into action!

- **Follow a plan:** **Clear space on your countertop** and unload your fridge shelf by shelf, separating items into "keep" or "discard."
- **Empty your food scraps pail** in advance so you have plenty of room for any food waste.
- **Explore new life** for food that is still edible but unattractive (use it in smoothies, soups, and more!) Find inspo and recipes at stopfoodwaste.org
- **Remove any stickers, rubber bands, or twist ties** from produce and put them in the trash.
- **Freeze expired liquids and dips** overnight. Once they're frozen solid, just pop them out of their tubs and into the compost pail!
- **Use eco-friendly cleaners** like vinegar to wipe down the shelves while they're empty. Check out our recipe for one below.
- **Organize the food you keep** by category. Make sure your perishables are easily accessible and use an "eat first" shelf to help keep your food fresh.

You can do it! And your super-clean fridge will feel brand new.



EASY PEASY? LEMON SQUEEZY!

Citrus peels are the perfect fragrant addition to homemade cleaning solutions. The peel contains D-limonene, a natural oil that leaves surfaces shiny, clean, and smelling great. Want to give it a try? Just add orange, lemon, pomelo or grapefruit peels to a jar, cover with distilled white vinegar, and let it sit for a week. Strain the liquid into a spray bottle, add your choice of essential oils, and get cleaning!



RecycleSmart.org

SPRING 2025

My life is garbage

But I'm in (resource) recovery

David Krueger

I've been RecycleSmart's Executive Director since January of 2023—it's a dream job for me, and the pinnacle of a 35-year career in solid waste and recycling. I feel blessed to have been able to spend my career doing work that I love that also helps the community and the environment.

I caught the recycling bug in college, when I noticed that all the recyclables from my dorm were going into the garbage. What?! I worked with other student volunteers to start Occidental College's first campus-wide recycling program, and what began as a fundraiser for my college hiking club turned into a lifelong obsession.

Since then, I've worked in three of the major sectors of the recycling and waste industry: Local government (including RecycleSmart), a private waste hauling company, and consulting. This breadth of experience has allowed me to see the industry from different perspectives.

Recycling is my avocation as well as my vocation. I am committed to Zero Waste and hate the idea of sending things to landfills and incinerators. I volunteer my time for environmental causes, including as a master composter instructor. I've



served on the elected boards of two industry/advocacy groups, the California Resource Recovery Association and the Northern California Recycling Association (NCRA). I also served as an appointed member of the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board, more commonly known as Stopwaste.org.

But it doesn't stop there. I write and perform parody songs and skits about recycling as a member of the unprofessional—but humorous—NCRA Players. Yes, I'm the author of many of the puns in this very newsletter. Keep an eye out! You may catch me dumpster diving and thrift shopping on weekends.

I have a great respect for RecycleSmart's cutting-edge recycling programs and dedicated staff, and for our community's commitment to recycling and waste prevention. I work every day to maintain the high quality of our programs and to improve them where we can.

Most of all, I look forward to continuing to serve RecycleSmart's residents and businesses for years to come, and to meeting many more of you along the way.

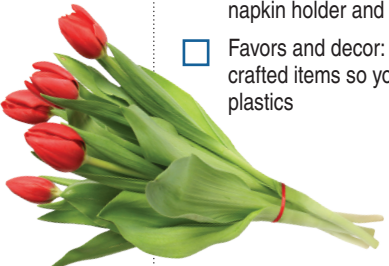
Party plan for an eco event

Thinking about graduation, weddings, or another celebration of some kind? We've put together this checklist to help make your events happy for the planet, too!

MONTH BEFORE

FIND A LOCATION

- ☐ When you choose a space, check:
 - Is it transit friendly?
 - Can people walk or bike there?
 - Are there appropriate bins for garbage and recycling?
- ☐ Call RecycleSmart for assistance with large community events! The law requires large community events and large venues to plan for convenient recycling and organics collection



PLAN YOUR MENU

- ☐ Potluck: Ask guests to bring reusable containers
- ☐ Catered: Choose a caterer who uses reusable serveware
- ☐ Home cooked: inventory your containers to make sure you can carry what you need! Think salad, cake, finger foods
- ☐ Schedule a free pickup with a food recovery organization (see the green box to the right)

INVITE YOUR GUESTS

- ☐ Include the date, location, transportation options and your intention to be low or zero-waste in your invitation
- ☐ Send electronic invitations like Evite, Greenvelope or Eventbrite
- ☐ Does your community have a group text or a Facebook group? Put the information there too!
- ☐ Remember to opt for recycled content paper if you use printed items



1-2 WEEKS BEFORE

LOCATION

- ☐ Check the forecast for rain or extreme heat and update your plans, if needed
- ☐ Confirm your location is still reserved and appropriate for the event, and make changes as needed



GET SUPPLIES

- ☐ Pack up reusable tablecloths, napkins, utensils and things to hold them, like a napkin holder and jars or baskets for utensils
- ☐ Favors and decor: Plan for reusable or crafted items so you can avoid single use plastics



BE A ZERO-WASTE GUEST:

Create a reusable foodware kit for your picnics, parties and more!



SIGNAGE AND DECOR

- ☐ Use reusable flags or banners to announce your location, instead of balloons or other single use-signs



CHECK IN WITH GUESTS

- ☐ Encourage folks to bring reusable water bottles and drinks in recyclable containers
- ☐ Remind vendors to use reusable or compostable serveware

PLAN FOR TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ Recommend guests coordinate carpools and provide transit help (we love the Transit app!)
- ☐ Let guests know where to park their cars or bikes. Consider valet bike parking if you're throwing a big event!

DURING

RECYCLING AND ORGANICS

- ☐ Set up your sorting stations. For large events, RecycleSmart will provide Clear Stream Waste Stations and bags for free
- ☐ Assign a rotating "Recycle Monitor" to support guests sorting
- ☐ Keep an eye on your reusables and have a dish station so they don't get tossed

AFTER

DONATE EDIBLE FOOD

- ☐ Deliver—or meet the pickup volunteer—for edible food recovery: RecycleSmart.org/FoodGenerators

HOORAY!

- ☐ Send guests home with good vibes and gratitude for joining your green event
- ☐ Send e-thank yous with a link to a shared photo album
- ☐ Give yourself a pat on the back for a job well done. Thank you for being part of the solution and inspiring your community!



GIVE AWAY YOUR GOODIES

You can donate leftover food from your event to local organizations! California laws protect edible food donations so that we can all prevent tasty treats from being wasted. Local food recovery organizations collect prepared foods, fresh produce, and large quantities of dry goods, then deliver food directly to organizations and people who need it. Visit the food recovery directory, available at RecycleSmart.org/FoodGenerators



I hate gloop!

Zach L., Concord



Hi RecycleSmart,

I am a hummus lover but I don't always eat the whole tub before it spoils. My partner is famous for buying SUPER spicy salsa and eating only half of the container. I don't like putting wet stuff in our kitchen compost and then racing down the stairs to the complex's green cart, so I got creative.

I put the yucky stuff in the freezer to solidify. Then when it's time to dump the pail, I take out the frozen items and just pop them out of their containers. No smell, no slimy bits in my kitchen pail. And the tubs are nice and clean, ready for recycling, too!

I hope others can use this. Thank you!

Need More Info?



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For tips, resources and other recycling services!

www.RecycleSmart.org
925-906-1801
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Organics, Recycling and Landfill

925-685-4711

Ask your property manager to contact Republic Services about additional recycling, organic and landfill carts or bins, special clean ups or to request motor oil recycling kits, recycling tote bags and kitchen food scrap containers.

This newsletter is recyclable!

Printed on paper made from post consumer waste (PCW).