



Kid's
Corner



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APARTMENTS AND CONDOS EDITION

SUMMER 2026

RecycleSmart Word Find

Find the pieces of a waste-free lunch below! Words are down, sideways, and diagonal:

Organics	Rot	Paper
Reuse	Recycle	Glass
Reduce	Cart	Metal

P X K M Z C A R T Q J X
K H Z O E O R Z G G O I
K T E R M T N E A L D G
M O Y G A I A H U A F E
H Z C A P U N L K S D T
C Y N N L R R Y L S E T
U I V I L O E K O S X F
A X Z C Q K C C W E B I
D T Y S L W Y K Y S O M
P A P E R R E D U C E E
E H L D P O W X C X L H
V L F W J T F H A V W E



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Recipes to reduce food waste
- Closing your cart—it matters!
- Remember to reuse



Tray Bien!

Let's celebrate a plastic-reducing update from our superstar Wastebuster school, Burton Valley Elementary in Lafayette! The school, which serves lunch for 400 students each day, updated its lunch tray system last fall. Students said "see ya!" to paper boats and plastic baskets, and "hello" to new steel trays.

The old plastic baskets required kitchen staff to place a sheet of parchment paper in every tray, adding to their waste stream every day. The new trays, on the other hand, are durable, washable, lightweight, and prevent microplastic pollution.

Burton Valley upgraded its kitchen at the same time, installing new washing and sanitizing facilities, to make sure trays could

be properly cleaned. They accomplished their kitchen remodel using funds from grants from RecycleSmart, the California Center for Environmental Health, Plastic Free Restaurants, and the California Department of Education.

This fall, RecycleSmart's schools team is supporting Happy Valley and Springhill Elementary schools as they switch to stainless steel trays. We are here to support your school, too! To find out more about RecycleSmart's resources for schools and the Wastebuster program, please visit RecycleSmart.org/wastebusters. We're opening our 2026-2027 grant cycle now.

VISIT OUR BOOTH AT LOCAL EVENTS

RecycleSmart & Republic Services attend community events throughout the year. Attending events lets us answer your recycling and composting questions, and we help event organizers with waste sorting. Look for our booth next time you're strolling through an event—we have a fun photo op and reusable giveaways! For more information about recycling and composting at your event, visit: RecycleSmart.org/event-recycling

SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER



Get the latest RecycleSmart news straight to your inbox by signing up for our e-newsletter! It's easy—just go to RecycleSmart.org/newsletter-preferences

to sign up. You'll have the option to opt-out of the paper newsletter.

Carts Around the World

Fun fact—when you publish a recycling newsletter, readers send you pictures of recycling and compost bins from around the world! We love it. Please keep em coming; send us your photos next time you travel. Today we're sharing the fun—check out how people are saving valuable resources around the globe.



Plastic, "alum" and trash, beachside in the British Virgin Islands



No curbside residential service in Debrecen, Hungary. Bring your recyclables to these bins!



A place for everything on your tray at KFC in England



Organics, paper, bottles and cans, and hazardous waste drop-off in Thailand



Making room for reuse—and coffee cups—in Canada



RecycleSmart.org



Don't Let Your Bin Burst

Service reminder: Closed bins prevent litter! If your lids aren't closed, Republic Service drivers might not be able to service them. Your building or property manager may be charged extra fees for extra pickups, including garbage or recyclables that prop the lid open.

If you have more items than can fit? Check with your property manager about scheduling a bulky, extra, or e-waste pickup at your site!

Don't be the one who leaves the lid propped open. Closed carts and bins help service run smoothly and keep trash, organics, and recyclables going where they should - and not onto our streets, rivers and creeks. When you make sure your lids are fully closed on pickup day, you are helping our shared environment stay clean!



TO BAG OR NOT TO BAG

Recently people have been asking about using BPI-certified compostable plastic bags in their kitchen food scraps pails. We still accept food scraps in BPI-certified bags, so if you want to use them, feel free. You may also choose to line your pail with paper bags, newspaper, or other uncoated paper products. Or you can simply drop your food scraps directly into the green cart without any bag at all!

We will let you know if there are any changes to our bag policy.

HELLO RECYCLING BIN

You can can text "Hello Recycling Bin" to (925) 940-5795 for on-demand sorting information!

Too Much of a Good Thing?

Sometimes we miscalculate at the grocery store and end up with aging produce. But don't toss it! You can use these recipes to banish food waste. Wilted, bruised, or even just a little mushy, there's a way to use it!

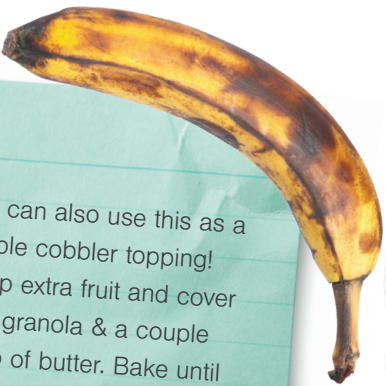
MUSHY BANANA?

Make this tasty granola:

- Mashed bananas
- Oats
- Coconut oil
- Maple syrup

Mix everything together and bake at 350 until crisp.

You can also use this as a simple cobbler topping! Chop extra fruit and cover with granola & a couple Tbsp of butter. Bake until fruit is cooked and granola is crisp.



STICKY PEANUT BUTTER OR JAM JAR?

Soak up some overnight oats:

- Almost-empty peanut butter (or jam) jar
- Rolled or quick oats
- Milk
- Maple syrup
- Cinnamon

Add oats, your choice of milk, maple syrup, and cinnamon into the jar. Mix and let sit in the refrigerator overnight. Eat in the morning, with fruit and nuts if you're feeling extra fancy.



LEFTOVER GREENS?

Whip up some pesto:

- Greens
- Basil
- Pine nuts/walnuts
- Parmesan
- Garlic
- Olive oil

Blanch your greens with a quick boil and ice bath.

Then blend everything together in a food processor until it reaches a spoonable paste consistency.

Use as a sandwich spread or add to pasta.

BRUISED FRUITS?

Turn them into jam!

- Fruit
- White sugar
- Lemon juice

Chop fruit.

Add to a pan with sugar and lemon juice.

Bring mixture to a rolling boil and then mash.

Cook until it thickens.

Pour into a jar and keep in the fridge.



WRINKLY BERRIES?

Bake them into a cake! They'll still be flavorful and delicious.

And don't chuck those strawberry tops—they taste great in a smoothie.



Need more info?



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For tips, resources and other recycling services!

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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).



My Tip

We all need reminders when we're developing new habits. So we've made a sign you can hang at your home or office. At the RecycleSmart office, we tape this sign to the inside of our office front door as a handy reminder when we go out.



HAVE TIPS TO SHARE?

Send your ideas to
Authority@RecycleSmart.org

Going out for food or coffee?

Bring a container!



Going shopping?

Take a tote!

