

NET ZERO NEWS

Mulberry's switching to compostables

By Marj Blackwell

Mulberry's is going green. Piedmont's popular, one-and-only market is now using compostable utensils and is "slowly transitioning" from plastic to compostable cups and deli containers. According to General Manager Sal Viveros, compostable utensils replaced plastic six weeks ago, and compostable cups and deli containers are on order. But, he said, "there's a supply chain problem. We expect deli containers to arrive in three to four weeks, but the coffee cups may take three to four months."

Viveros estimates Mulberry's uses a total of 1,000 coffee cups and deli containers a week. The costs for compostable, he says, are almost 35% to 40% higher than the costs of plastic, up from 18 to 25 cents per cup to 30 to 40 cents.

"Right now, we're absorbing the cost, but eventually, we'll have to pass it on to customers," he said.

"Plastic clamshell containers used for takeout salads are harder to replace," he said, "because it's difficult to find a vendor. Eighty percent of the market's straws are now compostable, except for slushies, which still use plastic because of vendor supply."

Mulberry's leftover food that is still edible – breads, salads, sushi, anything that cannot be sold the next day – is picked up every day and donated to homeless shelters, schools and other organizations. The market uses Republic Services to recycle its bottles, cans and cardboard, and for composting its food waste.

While Mulberry's offers organic and non-organic products, many packaged goods on the store shelves still come wrapped in plastic.

Viveros agrees with the City's



Mulberry's Market General Manager Sal Viveros.

Staff photo

goal to have the market transition to 100 percent compostable and biodegradable materials.

"It's what I want to leave for my kids," he said. He also credits the market's barista, Jill Ohaviano, for encouraging the transition to compostable materials.

"She's been a tremendous help," he said. "Eventually, probably a year from now, we will be 100 percent zero waste," Viveros predicted.

Alyssa Dykman, the city of Piedmont's Sustainability Manager, is delighted with Mulberry's transition.

"I'm thrilled to see a Piedmont local business working to incorporate sustainability into their business practices," she said, "as well as leveraging resources to reduce food waste and help address food insecurity. People often don't realize how much food they throw away every day that could be eaten or repurposed. As the sole grocery store in Piedmont, Mulberry's has an important role in the community."

Dykman notes that the City itself is striving to become more sustainable.

"Last December, the Sustainable Procurement Policy was

updated to minimize the City's contribution to solid waste disposal, pollution and climate change through its purchases and practices. Since then "we've seen an increase in green waste materials collected and diverted from the landfill," she added.

Piedmont's Sustainability Division also helps residents reduce their own carbon footprint through City sponsored programs such as the Piedmont Climate Challenge, the induction cooktop lending program, compost giveaways at the Corporation Yard, and an upcoming pilot program for home electrification rebates. The city's environmental actions are supported and enhanced by Piedmont Connect, a community volunteer organization that advocates for City and School District sustainability policies and raises awareness of actions Piedmonters can take to reduce their impact on climate change.

Marjorie Blackwell is a Board Member of Piedmont Connect, a collaborative community organization supporting resident initiatives and city efforts to build a sustainable future. For resources and questions, visit the city website: www.piedmontconnect.org.

CLIMATE CORNER

City offers free compost giveaway this Saturday

By Alyssa Dykman

[czm_7n6RyZA/viewform](https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/viewform.czm_7n6RyZA/viewform).

The City of Piedmont is providing residents with a free pickup of compost from the Corporation Yard at Moraga Avenue and Red Rock Road this Saturday, October 29 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. All households may pick up one cubic yard of compost while supplies last. Preorders are not available.

Bring shovels, gloves, and container(s) for the compost. Piedmont Public Works staff will be available to operate a backhoe to lift larger quantities of compost into the back of trucks. While not required, it is strongly encouraged that residents indicate their estimated pick up time on Saturday on the form here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1ckpa3i08Hx3bm-SYZf-ccheX8OFugf27qLoK->

The compost comes from yard trimmings and food waste collected by Republic Services communities participating in curbside organics collection services. Mixing compost with your soil adds nutrients to the soil, aids in water retention and pest control, and helps plants thrive.

Learn more about the benefits and uses of compost here: <https://www.stopwaste.org/at-work/built-environment/landscapes/compost-mulch-and-soil>.

More information is available on the City's news and notifications page (https://piedmont.ca.gov/government/city_news_notifications). Contact the city's Sustainability Program Manager, Alyssa Dykman, with any questions at: adykman@piedmont.ca.gov.



Photo Credit: Alyssa Dykman

Piedmont Public Works staff members Ray Haguian and Calvin Landes help load compost onto a Piedmont's truck during a compost giveaway event in February.

Eco-friendly ideas for Halloween

Halloween is just around the corner. Here are three easy tips for celebrating in an eco-friendly way:

1. Do It Yourself or Thrift your costume

This year, Americans are predicted to spend \$3.6 billion on Halloween costumes, many of which will end up in a landfill. Save the earth and your wallet by assembling your costume with items you already have around the house. If you need to buy something, try thrifting it before buying it new. Bonus tip: Give away your old Halloween costumes or list them on Facebook Marketplace.

2. Do It Yourself decorations

Rather than buying plastic decorations from the store, consider making your own Halloween decorations. You can try making tombstones with cardboard, using old stockings as cobwebs or making a "Happy Hal-

loween" banner out of string and construction paper. Organic decorations like pumpkins, gourds, hay and corn are a great option to reduce plastic.

3 Compost your Jack-o-lantern

When organic materials are put in landfills, they begin to decompose anaerobically (without oxygen) and they release methane. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas. To reduce your pumpkins carbon footprint, put it in the compost bin rather than the trash.





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