

Edited by Dennis Robison (robisode@gmail.com) & Rob Taylor (retaylor3d@gmail.com)

Contents

- Covid Challenge: Making our Food Go the Distance*
- Two Ways to Compost Food Waste*
- Hanover Recycling Changes*
- Use the Sunshine - Solarize 2020*
- Managing Garbage if Someone in Your Household Has Coronavirus*



The COVID Challenge: Making Our Food Go the Distance

Nancy Serrell

Food is always on my mind. And now that we're in throes of the coronavirus pandemic, I have plenty of company. Most of us these days are thinking about food – how to get it, how to prepare it, and how to avoid becoming ill with COVID-19 while we're trying to feed ourselves.

The virus also has changed our behaviors around food. We're at home more, cooking most of our meals at home, trying to space out trips to the grocery store, and too many of us are struggling to accommodate household budgets decimated by furloughs and layoffs. While those inclined toward culinary pursuits are baking sourdough bread and re-growing scallions, the rest of us just wish it were easier, faster and less expensive to put all those meals on the table.

The good news: by making small changes in the way we plan, shop, store and prepare food we can stretch our food budget, save time and extend the life of the food we buy. A step-by-step strategy for making those changes, along with tips and tools, has been developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through a campaign designed to cut down on the amount of food we bring home from the market but never eat. When food scraps go to the landfill, they create methane, a potent

greenhouse gas. That wasted food is a vastly overlooked driver of climate change, contributing an estimated eight percent of annual greenhouse gas emissions. We throw out more edible food than you think: each year, one-third of the food purchased by U.S. consumers is tossed out. But food waste is about more than what goes into the trash. Getting food from farm to fork takes an enormous amount of resources—energy, land and water — and conserving those resources for future generations will require collective action. But right now, during lockdown, there are things each of us can do.

The EPA's [Food Too Good to Waste campaign](#) presents a "wasted food challenge" along with steps we can take to better manage the food in our kitchens. The program has been implemented in dozens of states, and people who have participated have been able to cut the amount of food they toss by as much as 50 percent. They also reported saving both money and time, and most found the steps rather easy.

The strategies for the challenge lend themselves well to managing food during COVID, and you may already be doing some of them (or know you should). First: to cut down on how often you shop, make a shopping list with weekly meals in mind. Even more important: do a household inventory before you head to the store. Research has shown that taking stock of what is in your fridge, freezer and pantry, then planning meals around what you have on hand saves money and cuts down on wasted food. Veggies that are beginning to get soft (red pepper, zucchini, cherry tomatoes this time of year) can be roasted in the oven then tossed with pasta for a [dinner salad](#) or [casserole](#), put into a veggie omelet, or eaten cold for lunch with a scoop of hummus. The food cultures of the world have always featured well-loved dishes that use repurposed foods —

leftover rice became [fried rice](#); hard, stale bread became [pappa al pomodoro](#). This is how our grandmothers cooked.

As we try to shop less often, we are bringing home more food than we're used to. To make sure our food will last until the next shopping trip, it helps to pick up a few tips about food storage, and the EPA campaign has plenty to offer. For example, the fridge door is warmer than interior shelves, so milk shouldn't go there. Apples and bananas naturally emit the fruit-ripening hormone ethylene, so don't store them together unless you want them to ripen rapidly. Nor should apples or bananas be stored near ethylene-sensitive veggies or fruits like avocados, grapes, lemons or limes. Another storage tip: Befriend your freezer. Parsley stems, the ends of the onion you're slicing, peels and trimmings from carrots can be tossed into a freezer container to be used for soup stock. Chopping half an onion for a recipe? Chop the whole thing, and store the prepped remainder in the freezer or fridge, ready for a stir fry or sauce.

More tips, tools and strategies to help you toss less, eat well, save money are available in a simple online toolkit, the *10-Minute Fridge Reality Check*, produced by [StopFoodWaste.org](#). It includes a downloadable *Shopping List with Meals in Mind*, a *Fruit and Veggie Storage Guide*, and an *Eat This First* sign to designate an area in your fridge for food that is likely to spoil first.

Researchers are predicting that COVID, like the Great Depression, is likely to have long-term effects on our food behaviors. A [recent survey](#) found that 56 percent of consumers say they are avoiding food waste and saving leftovers for future use. One of the drivers of this food planning strategy is COVID-19 unemployment. But the specter of [dairy farmers dumping milk](#), eggs being destroyed, and [chickens being euthanized](#) as the loss of retail markets forced producers to discard tons of food worldwide has made us reassess the value of food. Like our grandparents, we may well come out of COVID with a new culture of responsibility around food. It's some comfort to know there's a lot we can do from our own kitchens.



Two Ways to Compost Food Waste

Yolanda Baumgartner

A friend once asked, "Why isn't it OK to send food waste to the dump? Doesn't it rot there to become soil again?"

My answer was yes and no. Food waste sent to landfill does decompose, but lacking oxygen in the landfill environment, the decomposition process produces methane gas, a potent greenhouse gas emission that is many more times damaging to the climate than carbon dioxide.

Sustainable Hanover has long advocated for food waste to be composted along with other biodegradable materials such as yard waste. And like many Hanover residents, my friend liked the idea of composting food waste but she didn't have a way to do so. Her backyard composter was no longer an option because one of our local bears was attracted to the bin whenever it contained food waste, even when no meat products had been added to it.

A solution where backyard composting is not feasible is a [composting service](#). Our area has one such service - [Nordic Waste](#). Nordic aims to "create a closed loop of returning what we take out of the ground to grow our food, put it back into the soil, thus allowing the cycle of production to continue." Subscribers receive a five gallon bucket, a compostable liner and lid to hold their food waste, which can include meat and dairy. Nordic collects the buckets and transports the contents to a composting facility to be processed into compost.

Nordic offers two weekly collection plans. I use the drop off service, which means I take my filled compost bucket on one of my shopping trips to the Coop and trade it there for a clean, empty bucket. I like the convenience of swapping the bucket on my own schedule anytime the Coop is open. My neighbor down the street uses Nordic's curbside service, which means they put their bucket by the street for pickup on a designated day of the week. The five gallon bucket is adequate for most households, and there may be neighbors whose

careful management of food waste has led them to consider sharing a subscription.

Landfills are a diminishing resource that is not sustainable and contributes to climate change. Hanover residents can significantly reduce what they send to landfill by choosing either backyard composting or a composting service such as Nordic Waste. According to EPA reports, food waste represents 22% of our country's trash pile.



Hanover Recycling Changes

Peter Kulbacki, Director of Public Works

Mark your calendar the **Recycling program will change beginning the week of**

September 21st. In the coming month residents will be receiving a joint letter from Casella and the Town outlining recycling program changes. In response to market down turns and to preserve the curbside recycling program, the Town has renegotiated a 5 year agreement with Casella. The following changes will occur:

- Recycling will no longer be picked up in bins, residents will be provided with toters for curbside recycling collection. Toters will allow all recycling to be picked up during a single rather than two weeks. The week of September 14th a toter will be dropped off at residents homes. If you don't receive a toter by September 18th, please call **1(800) CASELLA**.
- All "White" (B) week pickups will be moved to the same day in "Green" (A) weeks. Some residents will be required to place the toters in a different location than is currently acceptable due to the equipment used to perform the pick-up. Please check the following link <https://www.hanovernh.org/>.



- The final change is the **elimination of glass** from the curbside program. However, a drop-off location will be provided at 181 Greensboro Road (adjacent to DPW shed#2 and Farr Field Recreation area). The removal of glass from the program reduces the recycling program cost by as much as \$50,000 (25%) and will allow glass collected in the drop-off location to be recycled into fiberglass insulation or processed glass aggregate (PGA), which otherwise would be used as daily cover in the landfill.



Use the Sunshine!

Solarize 2020

Yolanda Baumgartner

During these long sunny days of summer, more than 160 households in Hanover are capturing sunshine, which would otherwise go unused, to make electricity. Their solar panels power equipment and appliances during the day and produce net metering credits for nights and late fall and winter when there are fewer daylight hours for electric generation. Many of these 160 plus residents began their path to solar by participating in a Solarize Hanover campaign.

Our current campaign - Solarize 2020 - is in full swing. It is a challenging year with the intense social, health and economic upheavals affecting everyone and their families. We understand many have pressing concerns. We are grateful for those of you who are able to explore solar adoption. It can be a positive experience in disconcerting times.

Solarize 2020 features three local solar companies who are leaders in the solar energy transformation happening in the Upper Valley. Each offers a distinct approach to residential solar - ReVision for rooftop and fixed ground mount

systems; [Solaflect](#) for ground-mounted trackers; and [Norwich Solar Technologies](#) for selling shares of a community solar project for those who cannot install solar where they live.

Our Solarize partners are conducting site evaluations for Solarize 2020 with COVID-19 safety precautions. Our outreach events will use virtual meetings and videos in place of Open Houses. Please [sign up here](#) to join Solarize 2020 to evaluate the solar potential of your property or the possibility of community solar.

Solarize is foregoing raffles and prizes this year to focus on our shared concern for those facing economic hardship during the pandemic. To this end, for every site or community solar evaluation completed, Sustainable Hanover will donate a meal to the [LISTEN Community Meals Program](#). For every completed installation, our Solar partners will donate a portion of the sale to the fund to put solar panels on Hanover's affordable senior housing apartments on Summer Street.

Both solar approaches (on-site and community solar) are eligible for the Federal tax credit which is 26%. It is scheduled to drop next year. Financing is available through general equity loan or through a custom solar loan like those from Mascoma Bank which is tailored to work with the tax credit timing.

Don't let all the sunshine go to waste! Go solar for energy independence resilience and long-term savings. Be a part of our community's Ready for 100 transition to 100% renewable electricity. Community-wide, Hanover residents, the Town and Dartmouth College have installed more than 3 megawatts of solar capacity - that is enough solar generated electricity to power 570 homes.

Breaking News!

Get Out Your Reusable Bags! See-
<https://www.nhpr.org/post/sununu-lifts-nhs-ban-reusable-bags-during-pandemic>



Managing Garbage if Someone in Your Household Has Coronavirus

The CDC recommends that households **dedicate a lined trash can for the ill person.** (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-your-home.html)

- Please **DOUBLE-BAG** any trash that is **from an ill person and ensure the bag is tied tightly shut.**
- **Use gloves when removing garbage bags, handling, and disposing of trash.**
- **Please wash your hands or use gloves when disposing of waste from those of Coronavirus.**
- **Change all trash bins with tissues, Kleenex, masks and gloves daily by securely placing them in a plastic bag. Tie the bag when three-quarters full then double-bag and tie it off.**
- Place bags in a secure area, where pets or people will not bother the waste, to keep illness from spreading to others.
- **Do not put trash bags out for collection for 72 hours, the estimated time the virus lives on surfaces.**
- If you are feeling sick, **DO NOT put your waste in communal waste areas until negative test results are known** or the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours.
- **Throw away any recyclable** item used by someone with the virus.
- Always **wash your hands** after handling or disposing of trash.

Source: How Should You Manage Your Trash and Recycling During the COVID-19 Pandemic? - Gallegos Sanitation
<https://gsiwaste.com/>