

SORTING IT OUT

Waste not, want not this holiday season

In a few weeks, many of us will be gathering around the table for a Thanksgiving meal. Like many American traditions, the meal is expected to produce excessive waste. A recent analysis by ReFed, an organization that studies food waste, found that on this one day, Americans will waste 320 million pounds of food, costing us \$550 million. This waste amounts to 267 million meals that could instead go to the increasing number of people in need.

Wasted food doesn't just impact the landfill, where it takes up space and creates methane gas, it also wastes the resources (water, fertilizer, fuel, labor, etc.) that went in to growing, harvesting, transporting, packaging, and storing the food.

To reduce waste at your table, there are some simple things that you can do this season and all year round, to reduce food waste. Start by taking stock of what you already have in the pantry. Then plan your meals before heading to the grocery store and stick to the list while you're there. Leftovers are expected at the holiday table so make a plan to manage them by distributing the leftovers to guests, turning them into new meals, or making space in the freezer so you can freeze them.

Food pantries won't take cooked leftovers, but if you end up with unopened shelf-stable, packaged items,

don't leave them in the pantry to be forgotten. Instead, donate them, perhaps along with a few extra items from the grocery store. To find a local food bank, go to rifeedbank.org. To learn more about food waste, head to ReFed.org.

Additional seasonal disposal tips:

Food waste: Compost at home or bring to the Black Earth Compost totes at the Rose Hill Transfer Station.

Pumpkins & Gourds: Compost in the backyard, donate to neighbors who have poultry or pigs, or bring to Sunset Farms or Clark Farms for animal feed and composting.

Leaves & yard debris: Bring to Rose Hill transfer Station. Bagged material is \$1.25/bag, bag tags can be purchased at the scale house, and bulk material can be driven over the scale at 3.5 cents/pound. Earth Care Farm in Charlestown takes large amounts of yard debris at their facility for free.

Questions? Call the Recycling Coordinator at 401.789.9331 x2259.

'Sorting It Out' is a recurring column of The Independent Newspaper that features recycling and composting tips from Charlotte Canner, the Recycling Coordinator for the towns of South Kings-town and Narragansett it will appear monthly in the newspaper.