

ENVIRONMENT

Should Food Waste Go Down the Drain?

NewsUSA

(NU) - Americans hoping to live “greener” lives often tackle the kitchen first – after all, separating the recyclables seems easy enough. But proper waste disposal can be more complicated than tossing cans in a blue box.

What’s the best way to get rid of table scraps? Should the food waste go in the trash bag? The compost pile? Or down the kitchen sink?

Putting food waste in the trash means it will be trucked to a landfill. Trucking food to landfills generates diesel fumes and emissions. And as food decomposes in landfills, it releases methane, a greenhouse gas.

Composting is a good option but not always practical for people who live in high-rise buildings or in colder climates. Plus, experts advise against composting certain types of food, like meat and dairy.

Numerous independent studies show using a garbage disposer is an environmentally responsible option. More than half of American kitchens have a disposer. On average, they cost less than 50 cents a year in electricity to operate and account for less than one percent of a household’s total water consumption. Recent advances in disposer technology, including the InSinkErator Evolution Series, make it possible to discard virtually any kind of food waste without concern about clogs or loud noises.

Once food waste enters wastewater treatment plants, it can be recycled into methane and used as a renewable source of



Using your garbage disposer keeps food waste out of landfills.

power for the plant. Also, many wastewater treatment plants can process food waste into biosolids, which can be used as fertilizer.

Here are some surprising facts about food waste:

- The average U.S. family of four produces about 2,000 pounds of food waste each year.
- According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, food waste is the third largest category of municipal solid waste (MSW) in the U.S., accounting for about 13 percent of MSW material.
- Americans throw away more than 25 percent of the food we prepare, according to a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Those scraps are 70 percent water, which makes it easy for disposers to pulverize waste and send it through sewage pipes.

For more information on how grinding food waste in a food waste disposer is environmentally responsible, visit www.insinkerator.com/green.