

## No room to compost? No problem

By Alison Highberger / *For The Bulletin*

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Kimberly and Mark Stroup live in an apartment in Bend, but that doesn't stop them from composting.

They don't have access to a yard or garden to make a compost pile, so they have their food scraps picked up once a week by Bend entrepreneur Daniel Brewster, 26, owner of Cascade Couriers. He pedals over to their home on his bicycle, pulling a trailer, and takes their kitchen waste away for \$10 per week. The Stroups like the environmentally friendly concept.

"Composting was something my parents always did when I was a kid, and I've read statistics about how many pounds of bio-degradable stuff goes into landfills that doesn't need to," said Kimberly Stroup.

For those like the Stroups, who like to do the environmentally responsible thing by composting, but who have little space to



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Daniel Brewster adds compostable material from a Bend home to the trailer behind his bike. He delivers the kitchen scraps to a Bend farm.

accomplish it, there are options. In addition to having the scraps carried by bicycle, compost tumblers, worms and yard debris drop-off sites are ways to make sure your organic waste isn't wasted (see "Resources").

If the worm idea is appealing, Laurie Perez, of Bend, is the woman to contact ([www.wonderwoman.com](http://www.wonderwoman.com), 390-7610). She started her Wonder Woman business in May 2007 to help people compost their kitchen scraps with the assistance of red wiggler worms. She provides the worms, you set up a wooden bin outside (well insulated with hay and leaves or other materials in the winter) or a large plastic bin in the garage.

"The worms love food scraps, and by spring you'll have rich compost for your flower and vegetable gardens," Perez said.

Cascade Couriers has been in business in Bend since May 2007. Brewster provides customers with a 3-gallon lidded bin to store food scraps for pickup on a weekly, biweekly or monthly basis. (The biweekly rate is \$7 per month, monthly is \$5.)

The Stroups keep their bin outside on their patio. In the kitchen, they have a bowl where they put compostable food scraps when they're cooking. They transfer the waste to the bin every day to keep odors out of the house.

Brewster came up with the idea for his business after moving to Bend two years ago. He was riding his bike to work every day, and thought he'd enjoy making a living with his bicycle, but discovered that messenger services had not done well here in the past. After



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Daniel Brewster tows a trailer behind his bike to deliver kitchen scraps from Bend homes to a local farm for composting.

doing some research, he came up with the idea of a human-powered composting and delivery service.

He found his 8-foot-long bike trailer from a company in Ames, Iowa, called Bikes At Work, Inc.

“It’s pretty easy to maneuver since the trailer is no wider than the handlebars. It was a little tough getting used to being weighed down, though,” he said.

On compost pickup days, he pulls about 150 pounds.

Brewster also does west Bend pickup service for Sweet Peas cloth diaper service, and on those days he pulls more than 200 pounds.

The hardest days are the snowy ones.

“It’s tough with the hills. I have studded tires for my bike, but if I stand up and pedal on a steep hill, the back wheel will just spin. So, I just have to gear really low and not stand up at all to get up hills when there’s snow,” he said.

Brewster takes the organic matter he collects from his 20 or so customers and delivers it to Jim Fields at Fields Farm in Bend, a grower of organic vegetables. Fields throws it in his compost spreader and uses it to enrich his soil.

“I’m glad to provide a place to bring it, and we’re making some good compost,” Fields said.

Fields also amends his soil with waste hops from Deschutes Brewery, and coffee grounds from Strictly Organic Coffee.

“I also import horse manure to the farm, and those three, mixed with the vegetable waste, makes for a really nice, high-value compost,” Fields said.

“It’s a win for the local businesses because they reduce the amount of trash hauling they need to pay for every week, and it becomes compost, which feeds the soil and ultimately feeds people here locally,” Fields said.

Brewster said with a smile, “My company provides a way for people to compost without actually doing it.” The only downside is occasional disapproval of his human-powered mode of transportation.



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Laurie Perez raises red wiggler worms, which can quickly turn kitchen scraps into compost.



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“There are definitely some people who get irritated when I’m taking the whole lane in the roundabout with my bike and trailer, but, for the most part, people in this town are very nice, and everybody that sees me just waves. It’s a good feeling,” Brewster said.

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Red wiggler worms make great composters.



Pete Erickson / The Bulletin

Laurie Perez checks on her red wiggler worms, which can make small-space composting faster and easier.

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## Composting resources for those with limited space:

- Cascade Couriers  
389-9369  
[www.cascadecouriers.com](http://www.cascadecouriers.com)  
Pick up your kitchen scraps and deliver them to Fields Farm via bicycle.
- reSource

388-3638

[www.resourceoregon.com](http://www.resourceoregon.com)

reSource sells the UCT-7 (urban compost tumbler) for \$200, made out of recycled pickle barrels.

- Wonder Worman

Laurie Perez

390-7610

[www.wonderworman.com](http://www.wonderworman.com)

Perez sells red wiggler worms that will turn your food waste into rich compost.

Yard Debris Options:

- Bend Garbage &

Recycling

382-2263

- Cascade Disposal

382-6660

Both have yard debris service for residents within Bend city limits: \$4.75 per month for a yard debris cart that is picked up every other week. A year's subscription is required.

Knott Landfill accepts yard debris seven days per week. Deschutes Recycling runs the service at the landfill and charges a fee. Call 388-1910 for information.

- Deschutes County Solid Waste Dept.

317-3163

[www.co.deschutes.or.us/solidwaste](http://www.co.deschutes.or.us/solidwaste)

Composting No-nos

- Cat, dog and human feces should never be composted; they may contain pathogens.
- Meat and dairy, fatty or oily foods break down very slowly, create unpleasant odors and also attract unwanted scavengers to your compost pile.

Source: [www.co.deschutes.or.us/solidwaste](http://www.co.deschutes.or.us/solidwaste)