

# **DO NOT PLACE YOUR PUMPKINS IN THE NATURAL AREA FOR WILDLIFE!!**

**Decomposing pumpkins will attract not only Squirrels and Deer, but they will also attract RATS!**

Our Public Works Department will be picking up Leaves in November and December. **Please place your pumpkins next to your leaf pile.** Both Leaves and Pumpkins will be brought to a local farm for composting.

## **Disposing of Pumpkins**

When pumpkins are tossed into the landfill, they decompose and release methane, a greenhouse gas. This is true of nearly all food we throw into the garbage, which is why we encourage homeowners to compost their food scraps.

When decorating with plants, it only seems natural to dispose of them outside. The nice thing about pumpkins is that they are great for composting, as they are nitrogen-rich. So instead of tossing your carved pumpkin into the garbage, consider sustainable pumpkin disposal: composting! To do this, simply remove any decorations or candles from the pumpkin and scoop out all the seeds so they don't germinate. Then add the pumpkin to your compost pile.

Another option is to save the pumpkin seeds for your garden. Simply wash and dry them, then store them in a baggy in a cool, dark place. If you don't have a yard or garden, you can give them to a friend who does or roast the pumpkin seeds in the oven as a healthy snack. **SEE MORE IDEAS ON THE NEXT PAGE**



# How To Dispose of Pumpkins



Uncarved pumpkins last a really long time. But once you carve pumpkins and let oxygen into the fleshy part of the pumpkin, the microbes and bacteria will get to work breaking down the seasonal squash. Even though you probably don't want to bake a pumpkin that sat on your front stoop for a few weeks, there are several options for carved pumpkins as alternatives to your garbage can.



## Collect Pumpkins for Animal Feed

**Local Farms + Zoos** | Provided your pumpkin isn't covered in mold, many farms and zoos can use carved pumpkins for animal feed. Reach out to a local farm or zoo to see if they accept your pumpkins. Some might even have fun programs to go along with a larger collection event. Apparently, big cats and elephants even like to play with pumpkins, so zoos may take the pumpkins as toys instead of food too.



## Animal Rescue Organizations

| Sarah Reidenbach is a veterinarian in Northern California and founder of [Ruthless Kindness](#), a small farm animal rescue. She says, "Our favorite time of year is between Halloween and Thanksgiving when people donate their leftover pumpkins to our animals. Most farm animals love pumpkins, from sheep to pigs to chickens, and several others. When you donate your pumpkins to a nonprofit rescue, you're saving the rescue a lot of money on food, so you're making a valuable donation."

She also mentions that it's helpful to drop off the pumpkins at the organization, if possible, because many non-profit organizations that accept pumpkin donations for animals do not have the capacity to pick up pumpkins throughout the community.



## Backyard Chickens

Raising chickens is growing in popularity, even in urban areas. Frank Hyman, the author of [Hentopia](#), encourages people to give their pumpkins to a neighbor who has backyard chickens. He shares that "We've recruited our neighbors to donate their Halloween pumpkins to our chickens. The chickens gobble them up and turn them into eggs, which we then share with the neighbors. Can't beat a system like that."

If you have backyard chickens, be sure to let your neighbors know you're happy to take their pumpkins if you could use the extra feed for your birds.



**Compost it** - Like all organic, plant-based food waste, your pumpkin will easily break down in your compost heap. We would suggest making sure that the seeds have all been removed from the pumpkin before composting (unless you want pumpkins growing out of your heap!) A pumpkin can take a while to compost, but if you chop it up into smaller pieces, it shouldn't take nearly as long to decompose.



**Make a pumpkin puree** - Once you've harvested your pumpkin's seeds, you can make a puree out of the rest of it. It's not hard to make a puree, simply quarter the pumpkin, lay it skin-down in a baking dish filled with about a cup of water and bake for 30-45 minutes at 400 degrees F. A knife should be able to easily cut into the flesh of the pumpkin. Remove the roasted pumpkin from the skin and process in a food processor until smooth. Voila! Pumpkin puree.