



# Missouri Organic



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BY MIKE SHERRY | STAFF WRITER

## Eden Alley goes above its duty

Would you pay a couple of hundred bucks a month for trash hauling even if you could get the service for free?

**Eden Alley Cafe** does.

The Country Club Plaza restaurant is located on the lower level of the Unity Temple, which handles garbage pickup for the building.

But Eden Alley, a vegetarian restaurant, pays \$230 a month to have Missouri Organic Recycling dispose of everything from food-preparation leftovers to the stuff customers leave on their plates.

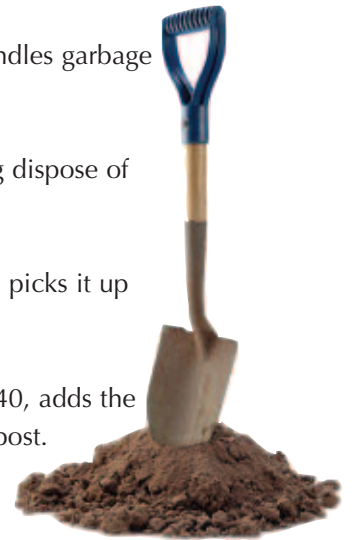
The garbage is placed in a black, 95-gallon bin in back of the restaurant, and Missouri Organic picks it up three times a week.

Missouri Organic, which is located near the Truman Sports Complex at 7700 E. U.S. Highway 40, adds the would-be trash to yard waste. The result is a soil enricher the company calls Nature Wise Compost.

Eden Alley co-owner Greg Cloutz said the additional bill is worth it because of the societal expense of throwing things away.

The cafe has been contracting with Missouri Organic for about three months, diverting about 90 percent of the cafe's food waste from the landfill.

In business since 1992, Missouri Organic's Food Residuals Environmental Diversion program processes between 12,000 and 15,000 tons of food waste a year, Vice President Kevin Anderson said.



Contributors include large industrial clients such as the Sara Lee-Foods facility in St. Joseph and Cargill Inc's soybean-crushing plant southeast of Interstate 35 and Front Street.

Eden Alley's output of roughly 400 pounds a week is peanuts compared with those giants, but Anderson said it just goes to show: "Everybody has their part to play. Nothing is too small, I guess is the thing"

Eden Alley has been in business for nearly 15 years, and the Missouri Organic contract is just one of its green initiatives.

For instance, it buys environmentally friendly to-go containers and cutlery from Kansas City-based Berlau Paper House and Eco-Products in Boulder, Colo.

Compostable cutlery costs about 6 cents an item, Cloutz said. Regular plastic utensils cost about a half-cent each.

Eden Alley gradually has expanded its green initiatives because of their expense, but Cloutz said it's worth every penny.

**"It's one ecosystem — our body and the Earth," he said. "What you put out there is what you get. So at some point, it's got to change somewhere."**

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