

Composting

CREATED BY YOUR STUDENT
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION
COORDINATORS

CAL_SSEC@YAHOO.COM
RECYCLE.BERKELEY.EDU/SSEC

LINKS

www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~compost

www.stopwaste.org/fscompost

www.epa.gov/compost

www.compostingcouncil.org

vegweb.com/composting

www.mastercomposter.com

www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

It's a fact of life that food rots, as those of you who've kept something for a little too long know all too well. But this unfortunate occurrence can be turned into an advantage by a simple process called composting.

Composting is the process of converting organic matter into decayed organic matter, which can be used as an excellent environmentally-friendly fertilizer. Many things can be composted—food remains, paper towels, yard clippings and trimmings, coffee grounds, egg shells, tea bags, even hair! It helps the environment by both diverting waste from landfills and recycling valuable organics, in addition to removing all the stinky things from

your garbage.

Best of all, composting is super simple! Anybody can do it—all you need is a little bit of space and a little bit of time. There are two main methods—one uses worms (vermicomposting) and the other doesn't. Alternative methods include closed air composting and burial. Check out the second link on the sidebar for more details and for information on how to get started.



HOW CAN I HELP?

- Compost! Reduce the waste stream, recycle organics and nutrients and produce some top-quality fertilizer while you're at it!
- Buy fertilizer that was made from compost. Encourage stores to carry it. It's better for the environment because it contains no artificial chemicals and pollutants.



The organics in composted fertilizer are also a lot better at moisture retention, so you can water less and conserve water!

- Spread the word about composting. Teach others—for example, lead a workshop in your community. One of the biggest reasons people don't compost is because they think it's too complicated.
- Help out local efforts by volunteering at community gardens or helping out in bin distribution and composting classes. If there are none, start your own! It's amazing how much one enthusiastic person can accomplish.

SOME QUICK FACTS:

- *Yard and food waste make up 30% of the waste stream. Composting your kitchen and yard trimmings helps divert that waste from the landfill, waterways and water treatment facilities.*
- *The red wiggler is the most common type of composting worm. Under ideal conditions, they can eat their weight in organic matter each day.*
- *Berkeley Worms is working with Dining Services to compost all post-consumer food waste. Pre-consumer food waste (AKA extra food) goes to a local food bank.*
- *Composting does not smell—it is only the rotting portions of food that stink. In worm composting, the worms eat the rotting portions. As long as you don't put in too much food for the worms, they will eat the food as it rots. Therefore, there is no rotting food left to create an odor.*
- *Throughout the world, 8.2 tons/acre of topsoil are lost on average every year. Composting enriches the soil and helps alleviate some of this nightmare.*



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