

# Composting, Cultivation and the Environment



By Nicola Kamp

Once read an editorial in the London Free Press entitled, “Every self-respecting home owner should have a composter.” The writer said so eloquently in a few words what I was tossing around in my head trying to articulate.

At that time, I was trying to come to terms with the city initiative to incorporate a green-box kitchen-scrap service in London. The thought of dozens of trucks circling our city picking up our kitchen scraps seems wasteful to me. Why not help Londoners to understand the benefits of composting instead? Rather than remove all our valuable organic waste, why not reduce, reuse, recycle — and compost!



For almost twenty years, I have been collecting anything that falls into the organic refuse category. Once our garbage bag of food scraps is full, it goes out to the composter. I dump it in and do little else. In six to twelve months, it is ready to be spread on the garden. All of the organic matter magically transforms into a gardener’s best friend.

Compost enriches the soil as it lightens it, and at the same time it increases the soil’s ability to hold water. Compost is full of the major elements for plants to grow, as well as the important trace elements. Compost is the magic elixir for the garden, and it doesn’t cost anything as it transforms refuse into valuable nutrients for our plants to flourish.

Improving the environment naturally is such an important goal, and helping the environment sustain us can be accomplished with baby steps. We all agree with that notion, but sometimes it is a challenge to incorporate daily habits into sustainable ones. Sometimes it is difficult to know how to minimize our ecological footprint. Something as simple as composting is one baby step to a healthier future.

Many of us are concerned with some aspects of composting, such as how does it work properly? There are definite methods that help the composting process, such as layering a mix of organic ingredients, adding enough moisture, turning the pile or stirring the pot! However, most of us are not too

keen on more work than necessary. I prefer to rely on time to do the job for me. Once the compost pile has cooked all by itself for a few months, you can check to see if the pile of leaves, grass, weeds and kitchen scraps has turned into something that resembles crumbly soil. Keep in mind that everything grown from the earth eventually returns to the earth — the cycle is a natural one, and will happen with or without your assistance. And it works just fine in the winter months too.

I have a hand-made three-bin composter that works very well for my needs. It is made of pressure-treated wood and galvanized wire fencing material. Each bin is approximately three feet tall and three feet wide. A three-bin composting unit can be handy to accommodate all the organic garden materials and household

scraps. You can use the three bins to turn over the compost from one unit to another as the pile decays, ending up with a fine crumbly dark-brown mixture. These composting units can be made easily, if you are handy with tools, or can be purchased.

Composting could be used as a metaphor for a more mindful connection to nature and people. We are happier, healthier and economically more prosperous when surrounded by a green environment, and our green environment needs nutrients to grow. Compost is the heart of a garden, large or small. Let’s teach our children and their children how to make our city — and our world — a healthier one.



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