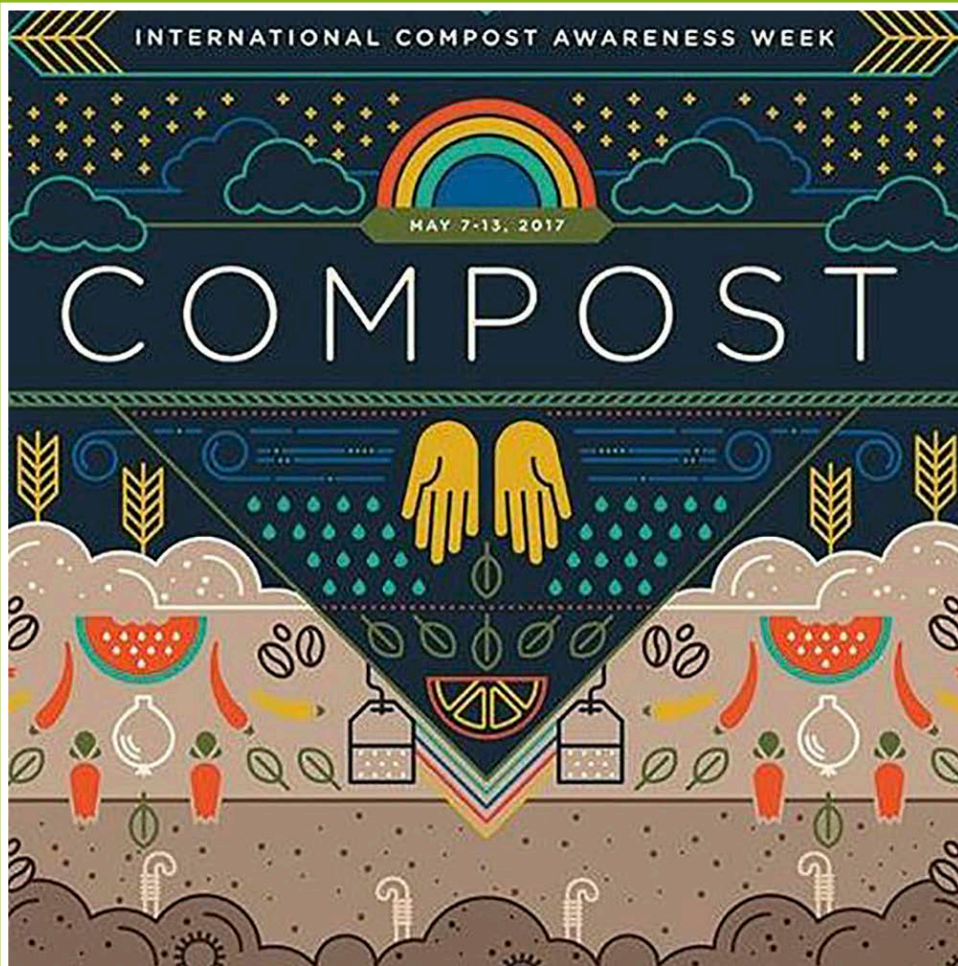


Composting

CHRONICLE

Spring/Summer 2017

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Composting Chronicle. We would like to remind everyone that this year Compost Awareness Week falls on May 7th -13th.



As always, we'd like to thank everyone who contributed material for this edition. If you've got any queries, comments or suggestions please send them in to wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk.

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Volunteer Celebration Evening

To say thank you to all of the dedicated Leicestershire Master Composters, Leicestershire County Council threw a Volunteer Celebration Evening on the 1st February.



Master Composter

Master Composters were joined by Love Food Hate Waste volunteers, Real Nappy advisors and Waste Action volunteers for an evening of catching up, networking, and celebration.

It was a great night, and a lovely way for us to say a massive thanks to everyone for the hard work they do.

If you have any photos or feedback from the night we'd love to hear from you. Email wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk



A Composting Challenge



David, a new recruit to Leicestershire's Master Composters, took on the challenge of reviving an office compost bin that had been fuelled for two years by only tea bags and fruit skins

The very green-heavy mix was too wet (1), rotted down slowly generating a lot of methane, and created very little usable compost.

In order to get the compost bin back on track, David removed all of the existing material and started again by adding small sticks (2) at the base to ensure adequate airflow from the bottom of the bin.

Next, he added layers of shredded paper and cardboard to get closer to a 50:50 mix of greens and browns, and then mixed in nettle to accelerate the process. (3)

Finally, he added a sticker to the bin, informing users what materials should be added, or avoided. He plans to visit the bin every few weeks to mix the contents and ensure the 50:50 balance is maintained to create the best compost.

The only material David found in the bin which had not begun to break down in the bin was a wine cork, pictured above!

If you have a compost bin in distress, visit www.lesswaste.org.uk/compost for advice on how to revive it and get back to making healthy compost in no time!



Composting down under



Community compost site in Brisbane, Australia

Kate Newman, Garden Organic

One of our Leicestershire Master Composters, Natalie, recently moved to live in Australia.

It's always sad to say goodbye to volunteers, but luckily Natalie continues to write her blog 'Food waste and other stories' from across the other side of the planet. She has joined a community composting site, which includes such delights as a 'worm swag' wormery and more familiar compost tumblers.

Natalie tells us that the warmer weather brings faster composting times (about 4 months in the community compost site) as well as interesting challenges, such as snakes. The main advice for snakes is to avoid getting rats, which in turn attract snakes!

It's interesting that they are facing similar challenges with food waste, that wormeries are very popular and the community composting schemes appears to be really well supported.

I think I can feel a Master Composter world tour coming on!!! To read and subscribe to Natalie's blog please go to the link below.

<https://foodwasteandotherstories.wordpress.com/>



Harvesting your compost this Spring

Master Composter and Waste Action Volunteer David Cannon has written some tips for harvesting your compost.

"If you have been composting, now is a good time to make use of the mature compost. I am using a "dalek" bin at the moment, but my tips can be used for most compost heaps."



The contents of the bin once it's been moved

Here's what I do to harvest my compost at this time of year:

- Don't bother with the little door – it's useful for small samples only.
- Spread out a tarpaulin or sheet of polythene next to the composter.
- Put your gloves on to stop the micro-organisms from creeping underneath your finger nails!
- Remove the lid, grab the top of the bin and rock it to and fro until it comes loose.
- Lift the bin off the heap and relocate the composter if possible.
- Slice off the top third of the compost with a garden fork and put it back into the composter.
- You can riddle the mature compost and use the fine stuff for potting or top-dressing.
- Use the rest as a mulch to improve soil structure, fertility and water retention.

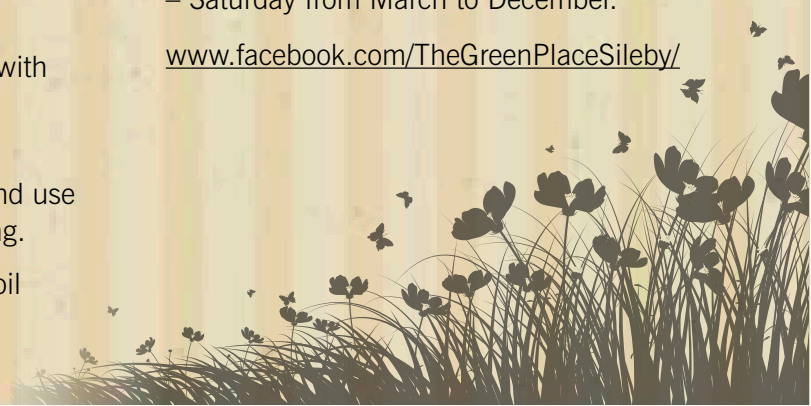
- If you were able to relocate the composter, grow something new in the old location.

You'll notice that my compost bin still has its winter jacket of bubble wrap on. This helps to keep it working over the colder months.

David also helps to maintain a composting area at The Green Place, Sibley.

You can find David there most Friday afternoons if you would like to have a chat about composting or any other aspects of waste and recycling. The Green Place is open Wednesday – Saturday from March to December.

www.facebook.com/TheGreenPlaceSibley/





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Do you 'love your clothes'?



In the UK, clothing makes up around four per cent of what we put in our bins. Collectively, the amount of clothing the UK sends to landfill every year weighs more than the Empire State Building.

This amount of clothing being thrown out has severe environmental consequences. Synthetic fibres such as polyester and nylon will persist in landfill conditions for hundreds of years. Natural materials such as cotton can be even worse, rotting down slowly in anaerobic conditions to produce large quantities of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

The manufacturing process is not much better, with the garment industry taking second place for most polluting industry in the world - second only to the oil industry. Over five per cent of the UK's carbon and water footprint comes from clothing consumption, but only a third of wardrobes are ever worn.

WRAP, the Waste and Resources Action Programme, have advised that the best way of reducing these environmental impacts is to increase the lifespan of clothing by nine extra months. Wearing clothes for that little bit longer

reduces their carbon and water footprint by 20-30 per cent.

Their pioneering campaign, 'Love Your Clothes' offers some top tips on loving your clothes:

- Think before buying clothes – Do you really need it? Is this garment made to last?
- Care for clothes properly – wash on low heats and reduce ironing to prevent fabric from wearing out.
- Upcycle and refashion garments to keep them out of the bin.

For more information about the Love Your Clothes campaign visit

www.loveyourclothes.org.uk

**CLOTHING
MAKES UP
4%
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