

Composting

CHRONICLE

Autumn/Winter 2017

The nights are starting to draw in, there's a nip in the air which means it's time for the Autumn/Winter Composting Chronicle!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the hardworking Master Composter volunteers for their time and efforts over the summer months. They have committed 834 hours since April to the composting cause and, in June, they

broke the record for the amount of hours volunteered in a month since the scheme began in Leicestershire!

In this edition:

P2

Composting down under



P3

Pumpkins



P4

The compostable wedding



P5

Zero waste swaps



P7

Hedgelaying course



Thank you to everyone that contributed to this edition, for any queries, comments or suggestions, please forward them to wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk



Composting down under



Natalie Pearson

Former Leics Master Composter

I moved to Australia eight months ago leaving my bokashi and compost bins behind me. I live in an apartment in central Brisbane – but city living does not make composting impossible.

Worm farms are popular here due to the convenience of keeping them on a balcony, and the sharing apps 'ShareWaste' and 'SpareHarvest' develop relationships between individuals who have waste and those who can use it. But best of all is Brisbane City Council's community composting scheme.

The community composting scheme began in October 2016 with four composting hubs in community gardens across the city. By the end of this year there will be 14, including one at a hospital. The number of users has increased dramatically, not just because of the new hubs, but due to the airing of 'War on Waste Australia' in May. The impact was such that the council ran out of the free caddies that residents receive when they sign up to the scheme!

For the last six months I have been volunteering at my local hub, a vital role as the composting scheme is run single-handedly by the council's Waste Education Program Officer, Clytie. Her enthusiasm for composting and reducing waste is such that we only need to ask for bins, pallets, signage, or advice, and we will receive them.

My local hub now has three extra bins and an area for maturing the compost. Throughout the year the compost has been used on the community garden, but hopefully we will soon be able to offer it to those who use the composting hub.

It's incredible to see the growth of community composting in Brisbane and to see how many people are interested in reducing the amount of waste they send to landfill. I may find myself fishing out a plastic bag each week, or grumbling that someone has put in a whole fruit/vegetable without chopping it up (or eating it) first, but we're all learning and the compost hubs and council-run workshops are great ways to educate and engage with the community.

That said, if I ever open the bin and find a snake in there, I'm getting myself a worm farm!

Pumpkins



Composting

It is estimated that in the UK up to four million pumpkins are carved and displayed at Halloween with the edible flesh and lanterns often discarded as waste, ending up in landfill and resulting in an additional 18,000 tons of waste.

When preparing the pumpkins for composting any items used to decorate the lantern should be removed e.g. candles, wax, aluminium foil etc. Seeds should be removed when cold composting as they may germinate in the bin or when the compost is used.

“Seeds are great roasted or some of them could be saved for next year’s crop!”

In composting terms, pumpkins are classified as a Green and will rot down to produce compost in six to nine months. The larger the surface area exposed to the composting microorganisms the faster it will compost, so smash or cut the pumpkin into small pieces. When added to the compost bin the pumpkin should be covered with a layer of ‘Browns’, such as shredded paper or cardboard to maintain the Greens/Browns balance and to discourage flies and other pests.

Pumpkins can also be composted in a wormery. The worms prefer their pumpkin soft and in small pieces so any large pieces that have survived the smashing should be chopped up. After adding pumpkin to the wormery, cover with a layer of bedding, shredded paper or cardboard.

They can also be fermented in a Bokashi kitchen composter. The pieces are added to the Bokashi bin with a tablespoon of Bokashi Bran per inch layer of pumpkin. Once the bucket is full, ensure that the lid is fitted correctly and leave it for ten to fourteen days, draining off the liquid every other day.

If you do not have a wormery, Bokashi or compost bin but do have a garden, it is still possible to Trench Compost pumpkin. Dig a shallow pumpkin grave in a shady part of the garden lining the base with a bed of vegetable leaves, peelings and other compostable materials. The smashed pumpkin is added and covered with compostable materials such as wood chip, sawdust or leaves and levelled off with a layer of soil. More details can be found at www.carryoncomposting.com

Rod Weston
Leicestershire
Master Composter



Fearon Hall – Pumpkin Rescue

This autumn Fearon Hall in Loughborough staged a pumpkin rescue as part of their Glorious Gluts festival, providing advice to residents on how to use up their leftover pumpkin in various yummy recipes and compost what’s left!



The Compostable Wedding

What do you do when you are a Master Composter planning your wedding in a marquee in horse paddock and the land owner demands no glass or ceramics on site?

I was adamant that I did not want to compromise my principles for the sake of convenience so it was a trawl on the internet for fully compostable tableware of course!

I knew I needed to get products that weren't plastic coated like the coffee cups found in most high street cafes, but what about glasses?

Encouragingly, and bewilderingly, there was a lot to choose from. Most companies gave an indication as to the relevant recyclable nature of their offerings.

However, most only catered for trade and it was soon obvious that no one company would be able to provide everything I needed in reasonable quantities.

Quality paper plates and bowls, wooden cutlery, recycled unbleached napkins and balloons were easy to come by and affordable. However, I thought a search for compostable glasses was a bit ambitious but was delighted to find a product range of glasses based on sugar. The pints and half pints were good quality and sturdy. We even managed to get wine glasses, although they were a tad unstylish!



The caterers were given strict instructions to sort rubbish into designated piles, but by the end of the night everything was all getting thrown into the same bins.

True to my principles, in the morning, with the reluctant help of two slightly disgusted guests who had the misfortune to have stayed over, we sorted all the bin bags into compostable, recyclable and landfill. I was gratified that, after catering for over 100 guests, we had around half a bin bag of landfill which was mostly food waste.

The compostables are now down on my allotment, covered in grass clippings and watered regularly.

Despite the claims from the suppliers that the products are fully biodegradable, the process used to create them is probably quite chemical intensive, so I won't be using the results for growing food but, instead, will use them on my flower beds.

Kym Barratt

Leicestershire Master Composter

Zero Waste Swaps

Composting is a fantastic way of reducing the impact of organic waste on the planet. According to latest government reports, composting food waste produces 6kg of CO2 per tonne compared to 680kg when sent to landfill.

But what about all of the single use disposable items we use in our day to day lives? Making a few swaps can really cut down on the amount of rubbish in our bins at the end of the week.

Cling film

Cling film, or the also commonly used aluminium foil, are made from finite and energy intensive resources. There have also been some concerns that plastic food wrapping such as cling film can leach chemicals into food when not treated properly.



Beeswax wraps

These waterproof wraps are made from fabric and grated beeswax. They can be made at home from upcycled textiles or bought from retailers with a range of pleasing colours and patterns.

Single use plastic water bottles

Some figures suggest less than 20% of single use plastic bottles are recycled. They are one of the most common items that pollute oceans and wash up on beaches.



Reusable water bottles

They can be made from plastic, aluminium or stainless steel depending on requirements and can be refilled from taps and drinking fountains.

Disposable coffee cups

Approximately 2.5 billion single use coffee cups are thrown away every year in the UK, amounting to a colossal 25,000 tonnes of waste. The plastic lining on the inside of the cup makes them difficult and costly to recycle.



A reusable coffee cup!

There are many different styles and sizes to choose from, and most chain coffee shops will offer a discount when a reusable cup is presented.

Plastic toothbrushes

Over one billion per year are thrown away in the USA alone. Toothbrushes are rarely recycled, and, like other plastics, often end up polluting the oceans. A female albatross was recently filmed attempting to regurgitate a plastic toothbrush to feed to her chick!



Toothbrushes made from bamboo!

There are many different styles and sizes to choose from, and most chain coffee shops will offer a discount when a reusable cup is presented.

Bottled soaps and shampoos

Another source of the infamous single use plastic bottles, Recycle Now revealed that only half of bathroom packaging was recycled in the UK. The plastic produced by shampoo, conditioner and shower gel alone really adds up!



Switch liquid to solid

Switch liquid to solid. Bars of soap and shampoo can be purchased with no packaging at all and are just as effective at cleaning.



Turn your green waste into tasty crops

Buy a cut price compost bin

Compost bins are available in 2 sizes:
220 litre: £10.98 | 330 litre: £11.48

Buy one, get second half price

Order today

visit: www.getcomposting.com



@LeicestershireRecycling



Hedgelaying Course



Develop your hedgelaying skills....

Do you fancy an exciting challenge helping maintain a green corridor for wildlife whilst enjoying being active outdoors in a beautiful part of the Leicestershire countryside? If you do, and you have some previous experience of hedgelaying then this is the right course for you! Build on your previous experience and practice skills in cutting, laying and binding a hedge in the traditional midlands style.

LCC is running in partnership with TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) an advanced hedge laying course for those with some previous experience of hedgelaying on the 2nd and 3rd December. More details visit the Less Waste Website **www.lesswaste.org.uk/events**

Or phone Clive Forty at TCV on 01162710178. Cost of the course is £70 with a discount for those living in Blaby District or the Boroughs of Charnwood or Hinckley and Bosworth. 20% discount applies to those on JSA.

Get in touch!

We would love to hear what you think of the Composting Chronicle! What sort of articles do you like to see, what articles perhaps not so much? Please get in touch with us at **wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk** or call us on **0116 305 7005**.

We hope you enjoy each edition, but if you would like to unsubscribe, please let us know so we can remove you from our mailing list.

If you would like to look back over past editions of the Composting Chronicle, the backlog is now available here **www.lesswaste.org.uk/compost/rot-a-lot-composting-club/**

.....
If you wish to unsubscribe from the chronicle **[click here](#)**.