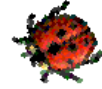




# Compost Corner



University of Delaware  
New Castle County Cooperative Extension

Volume 1, Issue 1

## New Castle County 4-H Receives Coca-Cola REAL 4-H! Grant

National 4-H Council and The Coca-Cola Foundation have awarded New Castle County 4-H with a REAL (Refresh the Environment with Action Leaders) 4-H! Community Grant.



*Compost Bins received through a partnership with Delaware Solid Waste Authority for our grant.*

New Castle County's *Environmental Heroes: Youth Making A Difference Through Composting* is focused on recycling, and was selected for its innovative and creative environmental science ideas, inclusion of the essential elements of 4-H, the number of youth that will be reached through the program, local partnerships and the program's ability to make a difference in the community.

As a result of this grant, New Castle County 4-H will conduct a composting education program that will reach

300-400 youth along with 100 adults within the next year. The youth will be representative of our After-school sites, community schools, and 4-H clubs. Once each participant completes their compost education, they will then receive a backyard composter. In addition, we will develop a tech team of 4-H youth who will map the location of each composter using GPS / GIS technology and we will publish a monthly newsletter with updates and information, like this one.

### Inside this issue:

<i>Why Should I Compost?</i>	2
<i>Getting Started ...</i>	2
<i>Materials List</i>	2
<i>Compost Word Search</i>	3
<i>Contact Info and other Resources</i>	4

### Upcoming Stories:

- *We will be collecting your composting pictures*
- *There will be a "compost story of the month" winner*
- *Looking for youth interested in being part of the compost Tech Team*



# Why Should I Compost?

If you had a choice, which would you rather see grow - that precious little garden in your backyard or that ever-expanding landfill down the highway? We hope you choose your garden. By composting your yard waste and kitchen scraps, you reduce the amount of waste that you are "feeding" to the landfill. At the same time you produce "food" for your yard and garden that is as good as any soil conditioner your money can buy.

## Here are some fun facts:

- Compost improves the structure, texture, and aeration of the soil, enabling your plants to develop stronger, deeper root systems.
- Compost contains nutrients, including trace elements, that are essential to plant growth. Compost releases these substances slowly, over time, so that they are available to the plants throughout the growing season.
- Compost adds beneficial organisms to the soil.
- Compost reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and mulches. This can save you money and can also reduce runoff of these chemicals into streams and rivers.
- Using compost can reduce the need for watering your garden.
- Composting can reduce by 20% or more the quantity of material you send to the landfill.

# Getting Started ...

First, choose a location for your compost bin at least 20 feet away from the nearest house. Pick a spot that is flat and well drained. A shady location is preferable; direct sunlight may cause the pile to become too hot and to dry out. Make sure the bin is close to a source of water (e.g., within reach of a garden hose). Avoid placing the bin against a tree or wooden building; the compost could cause the wood to decay. Once your bin is in place, it

is ready for yard wastes and kitchen scraps. If you have been stockpiling materials such as leaves or garden greens, you can put them into the composter all at once, or you can put a small quantity (4 to 6 inch layer) of the stockpiled material in the composter and add the rest gradually, alternating it with layers of other materials as they become available. Alternating the types of materials you add to the bin will speed up the decomposition

process, especially if you alternate high-carbon (browns) materials with high-nitrogen (greens) materials and mix the contents of the composter occasionally. It may be helpful, when first building your compost pile, to mix in a small amount (no more than ½ shovelful) of rich garden soil or finished compost; both are good sources of microorganisms essential to the decomposition process.



## Material List



Yes		No	
Weeds	Leaves	Bones	Mayonnaise
Bread	Old Potting Soil	Cat Manure	Meat
Coffee Grounds	Paper	Chicken	Oils
Egg Shells	Sawdust	Dairy Products	Painted or
Evergreen Needles	Straw	Diseased Plants	Treated Wood
Fruit	Tea Leaves	Dog Manure	Peanut Butter
Fruit Peels & Rinds	Vegetables	Fish Scraps	Salad Dressings
Garden Wastes	Wood Ash	Lard	Vegetable Oil
Grass Clippings	Wood Chips	Weeds gone to Seed	

# Composting Word Search

Find the words that relate to the compost pile.

P T S O P M O C L O M C R  
A E S O W B U G S C L E C  
L P S B A C T E R I A D I  
F O Y E E O N E A A T E L  
I U T O R R E T L H C C I  
S I N S O C G G B A A O H  
M S O G B N O B R A C M P  
R H T Z I A R D L R S P O  
O N A R C L T B E O E O S  
W I P Q S B I P I S B S E  
T S D L O M N L I S I E M  
R E T T A M C I N A G R O  
Y C S H U M U S L C W C T

mesophilic  
humus  
organic matter  
bacteria

mite  
soil  
carbon  
springtail

sow bugs  
worms  
nitrogen  
fungi

decomposer  
mold  
aerobic  
compost

 **COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION**  
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

**NEW CASTLE COUNTY**

**NCC Cooperative Extension**  
461 Wyoming Road Rm. 131  
Newark, DE 19716

**Phone: 302-831-2507**  
**Fax: 302-831-8934**  
**E-mail: [jashby@UDel.Edu](mailto:jashby@UDel.Edu)**  
**[kdaly@UDel.Edu](mailto:kdaly@UDel.Edu)**  
**[cjmurphy@UDel.edu](mailto:cjmurphy@UDel.edu)**

**We're on the web!**

<http://ag.udel.edu/extension/ncc/4h-yd.html>

<http://ag.udel.edu/extension/ncc/nccindex.php>

4-H is a **community** of  
 **young people**  
**across America** who are learning  
**leadership, citizenship and**  
**life skills.**

*Cooperative Extension Education in Agriculture and Home Economics, University of Delaware, Delaware State University, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress on May 8 and June 30, 1914. It is the policy of the Delaware Cooperative Extension System that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex disability, age or National origin.*

## Resources:

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control  
(<http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov>)

The Delaware Solid Waste Authority  
([www.dswa.com](http://www.dswa.com)), or call the Citizen's Response Line at 1-800-404-7080

Mid-Atlantic Composting Association  
Contact through website at  
([www.midatlanticcompost.org](http://www.midatlanticcompost.org))



### University of Delaware's Cooperative Extension Office

The New Castle County Extension Office, through its Master Gardeners Program, gives workshops, classes, and demonstrations on composting throughout the year. Visit the web site (<http://ag.udel.edu/extension/horticulture/index.htm>) or call your local office:

New Castle County: 831-2667  
Kent County: 730-4000  
Sussex County: 856-7303

### Locations of Compost Demonstration Sites where you can learn more are:

- Bellevue State Park, Wilmington
- Behind the Candlelight Theater, Ardentown
- Killens Pond State Park, Felton
- Trap Pond State Park, Laurel

For further information on these sites please contact Hetty Francke at [hettyw@udel.edu](mailto:hettyw@udel.edu) or 475-9157

