Green Bag Lunch: Composting Opportunities at Home

Putting good ideas to work for a carbon-neutral, flourishing campus

Sustainable CWRU
What the Office of Energy & Sustainability Works On

- Climate Action Plan Management
- Energy Efficiency Projects/Campus Energy Metering
- Recycling & Waste Education
- Sustainable Transportation Education
- Energy & Sustainability Data Collection & Reporting
- Green Building & Green Grounds Advising
- Working to Create a Culture of Energy and Sustainability Awareness
- Community Engagement in Energy & Sustainability
  - Sustainability House program, Student Sustainability Ambassadors, Green Bag Lunches
  - Bike committee, Scooter Committee, Recycling Committee, CAP Committee, Tree Committee
TODAY’S SPEAKERS:

Carin Miller, Education Specialist, Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District

Zoe Apisdorf, Director of Residential Services, Rust Belt Riders

Laura Klingler, Assistant Director University Events, CWRU
Carin Miller
Education Specialist
Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District
CUYAHOGA COUNTY SOLID WASTE DISTRICT

We are the public agency helping the people of Cuyahoga County to reduce, reuse and recycle at home, at work and in our communities.

We serve the 59 communities within Cuyahoga County.

Learn more at CuyahogaRecycles.org
Why Compost?

It is an easy waste reduction strategy for households

- Food scraps & yard waste = 25% municipal solid waste
- Improves your ecological footprint (carbon sequestration)
- Organics in landfills produce methane gas
Why Add Compost

Good quality compost supplies organic matter, nutrients, and beneficial microorganisms
• Improves workability of soil and resists compaction for better aeration and water holding capacity
• Stimulates healthy root development
• Adds nutrients back into the soil to improve soil fertility
• Results in healthier food
Composting is the aerobic biological decomposition of organic material under controlled conditions.

A mixture of stable organic matter, minerals and microorganisms.
A Healthy Pile

• Create a healthy environment that supports micro-organisms (bacteria and fungi) and macro-organisms (worms, insects, slugs)
• Physical and chemical decomposers break down organic waste
• Happy, healthy creatures reproduce, consuming your organic scraps more efficiently
• All living things need shelter, food and water
Location

- Level, well drained area
- Build over soil or lawn
- Discreet & accessible
- Sunny spot
• Keep volume around 3 feet cubed
• Center of pile 90–120 degrees F
• 50% moisture
• Oxygen – turn/stir
A Healthy Pile

Balanced diet
A Balanced Mixture
Affects quality and speed of decomposition

30-40% Green, nitrogen containing organic matter supplies protein

Vegetables, fruits, flowers, plant clippings, grass clippings, coffee grounds, manure, etc...
A Balanced Mixture

60-70% Brown, carbon based organic matter supplies energy in carbohydrates

Dead leaves, straw, sawdust, wood chips, shredded newspaper, corn stalks, cotton rags, nut shells, pine needles, etc...
Compost Dos

- Grass clippings
- Plants
- Fruits, vegetables and grains
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds
- Hair (pet, human)
- Leaves
- Nuts
- Straw, hay
- Tea bags (not plastic)
- Sawdust
- Lint (natural fibers)
- Shredded paper
Compost Don’ts

- Meats
- Dairy Products
- Oils and Fats
- Bones
- Cat and dog droppings
- Cat litter
- Diseased plants
- Weed seeds
- Branches or limbs
- Glossy paper
- Plastic tea bags
How to Start the Composter

Lay down base material (chopped brush or other coarse materials) on soil to allow air circulation around base of pile

Alternate layers of greens (nitrogen) and browns (carbon) around 3” - 6”

After each green/brown layer, add garden soil or compost
Is it working?

- The pile will heat up
- Materials no longer look like the original stuff you put in the pile
- Little to no odor other than an earthy one
Problem Solving
Refer to section in Composting Brochure or online sources

Pile Too Wet?
- add sawdust, straw or wood chips, and aerate

Pile Too Dry?
- Turn pile, and add water, or leave top off

Pile Damp & Sweet Smelling? Won’t heat up?
- It needs nitrogen so add fresh grass clippings, manure, blood meal or urea fertilizer

Pile Smells Like Ammonia?
- add brown leaves, sawdust, straw or wood chips.
Bins Available

Ultimate Dirt Machine (Digester bin) = $55
Go Plastics, Georgia
Retail value over $100

Wishing Well Composter = $50
Covered Bridge Organics, Ohio
Retail value $74 or more
Other Equipment

Yard Butler - Compost Aeration Tool
$20

Compost Thermometer
$10

Sure-Close Pail = $5
Retail value $20
Add a pail to hold your food scraps in the kitchen until you’re ready for a trip to the compost bin
**Ultimate Dirt Machine**

**Digester Model**

- 70 gallons, 29”X39”
- 100% recycled plastic
- Good for passive composting or someone who does not need the soil amendment
- Takes all food scraps and yard waste
- Minimal maintenance
- Good second bin, especially with large lawn, lots of trees and/or eat mostly vegetarian meals
How to Start the Digester

- Select a sunny location with good drainage
- Dig a pit 3” wider than digester
- Position composter and backfill with dirt to cover 3” over flange
- Clean out and spread material after a year and start again or move bin

*Instructions are on a sticker on the bin.

It could even be placed in a raised bed
Wishing Well Composter

- 135 gallons, 30”X36”
- 100% recycled plastic
- Ease of access to top, good for active composting to turn pile
- Follow dos and don’ts of food scraps and yard waste composting
- Requires a bit more maintenance
- Good bin for households with large lawn, lots of trees and willingness to maintain carbon to nitrogen ratio

* Instruction booklet comes with each composter in a plastic bag.
Resources

The PDF of our Composting Guide is attached. If someone wants to request a hard copy they can do so via this link: https://cuyahogarecycles.org/PublicationRequest.aspx

Backyard composting Webinars: https://cuyahogarecycles.org/compost_workshops_and_bins

Info on composting equipment sold by the district: https://cuyahogarecycles.org/buy_a_compost_bin

Equipment order form: https://cuyahogarecycles.org/Documents/PageContent/Composting/Composting_Equipment_Order_Form.pdf
Zoe Apisdorf
Director of Residential Services
Rust Belt Riders
Rust Belt Riders

Drop-off

Find the plan that's right for you.

• $10 per month
• 24/7 access to convenient drop-off locations
• 10% discounts on all tilth soil products
• Access to workshops + perks

Pick-up

Weekly pick up with bin swap.

• Starting at $30 per month.
• A clean, lined 5-gallon bucket delivered to your door.
• 24/7 superior customer service, answering all composting questions.
• 10% discounts on all tilth soil products
• Access to workshops & perks.
Laura Klingler
Home Composter
&
Assistant Director University Events
at CWRU
Laura’s Compost Bin
CWRU Sustainability Team

sustainability@case.edu & energymanager@case.edu

- Stephanie Corbett, Director of Energy & Sustainability
- Erin Kollar, Assistant Director Sustainability
- Erika Weliczko, Energy Manager