

BUZZ, BODY & BITES

A newsletter for actively aging adults
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Family & Consumer Sciences
August 2023 Newsletter

Buzz



Composting at Home

Every gardener knows about the soil improvement benefits of either store-bought or compost that is produced at home. Even if you are not a gardener, you can save your plant-based trimmings and organic waste from your kitchen, your houseplants, some pet bedding, and other indoor and outdoor sources to compost at home or give to compostable recycling centers that are increasingly being offered in urban areas like Alexandria VA and Arlington County VA. Regularly adding compost to soil will benefit the soil and us in a number of ways.

- Composting helps to recycle plant material and return nutrients to the garden or landscape that might otherwise be sent to landfills.
- The soil's structure will improve because compost contains substances that encourage aggregation. If you have sandy soil, compost will increase its water holding capacity. If you have clay soils, adding compost will help the soil drain better, and will make water and nutrients more easily available to plants.
- Compost increases nutrient holding capability (i.e., cation exchange capacity) and the buffering capacity of the soil. This prevents rapid leaching of lime and nutrients and ameliorates the detrimental effects of overliming and overfertilizing.
- Compost can help make garden soil ready to use earlier in the season.
- By helping to make soil more porous, compost reduces soil erosion because it promotes water infiltration into soil and decreases the bulk density of the soil, making it easier for roots to penetrate the soil.
- Compost provides food and habitat for earthworms, soil insects, and microorganisms like mycorrhizal fungi that help make nutrients more available to plants.
- Compost contains decaying plant and animal refuse that provide trace elements as well as humic and other organic acids that provide needed nutrients to plant growth and can reduce plant drought stress.
- Compost promotes healthy plants that are less susceptible to diseases and insect pests, reducing the need for pesticides.

Contributed by: Kirsten Conrad, ANR Agent, VA Cooperative Extension, Arlington County

WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE COMPOSTED

Can be composted:

- Coffee grounds and filters
- Fruits and vegetables
- Egg shells
- Tea bags with staples removed
- Yard trimmings, leaves, grass clippings
- Paper and cardboard
- Nutshells

Should not be composted:

- Fat, grease, oil, lard
- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Diseased plants
- Meats, fish, bones
- Pet waste, cat litter
- Plant trimmings with pesticides

For information on how to compost at home see:

<https://eri.iu.edu/tools-and-resources/fact-sheets/at-home-composting.html>

Bites

Summer Peach Drink



Refreshing, fruity, and flavorful, this quick and easy recipe makes a refreshing summertime drink.

Source: Home Cooking Adventure - homecookingadventure.com

Basic Ingredients:

- 4 peaches, peeled and cut into slices
- 2.5 cups of water
- 1 lemon
- 5 Tbsp sugar
- Peach slices
- Mint leaves
- Ice cubes

Instructions:

1. Place peach slices in the bowl of a food processor or blender. Add lemon juice, sugar, water and ice cubes. Puree until smooth.
2. Add ice to serving glasses and fill each glass with peach juice. Garnish with peach slice and mint leaves.

Body

Exercise Safety in the Heat

As you strive to achieve the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity a day, it's a good to get outside in new surroundings and fresh air. During the summer months, however, it can be hot. Follow these steps to keep safe:

1. Avoid the hottest parts of the day. Workout before 10am and after dusk.
2. Apply sunscreen, even on cloudy days. Re-apply every two hours.
3. Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water before and after exercise.
4. Wear loose-fitting clothing to insure air circulation. Light-colored clothing reflects the sun's rays to keep you cool.
5. Pay attention to how you feel! If you feel dizzy, faint or nauseous. Find shade, sit down, and drink water until you feel better.

Mind Games

COLOR THE COMPOST



RESOURCES

Environmental Protection Agency Composting at home.

www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home

Composting FAQs

mgmv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Compost-FAQs.pdf

What and What Not to Compost

vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48088/HORT-49-PDF.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Safety tips for exercising outdoors

health.ucdavis.edu/blog/cultivating-health/5-tips-to-exercise-safely-when-its-hot-outside/2022/06

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