



## Buzz, Body & Bites

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

### 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 wastes from your kitchen, your houseplants, some pet bedding, and other indoor and outdoor sources to 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 over liming 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

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

## Summer Peach Drink

Source: Home Cooking Adventure - [homecookingadventure.com](http://homecookingadventure.com)

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

Ingredients:

4 peaches, peeled and cut into slices

2.5 cups of water

1 lemon

5 Tbsp sugar

Peach slices

Mint leaves

Ice cubes

Directions:

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.

## Exercise Safety in the Heat

As we strive to achieve the recommended 150 minutes of moderate intensity, it's a great idea to get outside to incorporate new surroundings and fresh air. However, during the summer months, it can be very hot outside. Here are steps to keep you safe:

- Avoid the hottest parts of the day during. Try to workout before 10am and after 6pm, unless you're going to a refreshing pool, of course.

- Always apply sunscreen, even on cloudy days. Re-apply every two hours or after sweating/swimming.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water before and after exercise. Take sips of water every 15 minutes during activity.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing to insure air circulation. Light-colored clothing can help by reflecting the sun's rays to keep you cool. Sweat wicking clothes dry faster and allow your body to stay cool.
- Pay attention to how you feel! Check in with yourself often to assess if you're dizzy, faint or nauseous. Find shade, sit down, and drink water until you feel better.

## Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

Composting at home.

[www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home](http://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home)

Composting FAQs

[mgnv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Compost-FAQs.pdf](http://mgnv.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](http://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48088/HORT-49-PDF.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Safety tips for exercising outdoors

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

Editors: April Payne, MS; Carlin Rafie, PhD, RD

Peer reviewers: Jane Henderson, MEd; Susan Prillaman, MS; Aisha Salazar, MS, and Pegi Wright, MEd

Subscribe at: [buzzbodybites-g@vt.edu](mailto:buzzbodybites-g@vt.edu)

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: [ext.vt.edu](http://ext.vt.edu)

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.

2024

HNFE-1107NP-A