

CBS Corporate Safety and Environmental Affairs

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Composting

Composting is a form of waste disposal where organic waste decomposes naturally under oxygen-rich conditions. Composting as a recognized practice dates to at least the early Roman Empire. According to the US EPA, over 8% of the waste that each person generates each day could be recovered for composting. That works out to over 140 pounds per person, per year. Landscaping waste is another easily compostable form of waste that often ends up in landfills. Landscaping waste and trimmings account for nearly 13% of municipal solid waste in the United States. When we throw away landscaping and food waste, it decomposes in a landfill and releases methane gas. California, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont as well as many municipalities require certain businesses and, in some cases, residents to compost.

Benefits of Composting:

- Enriches soil, helping retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Encourages the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material.
- Reduces methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint

What to Compost:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Eggshells
- Coffee grounds and filters/Tea bags
- Shredded newspaper
- Cardboard
- Yard trimmings
- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint

What NOT to Compost:

- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs
- Coal or charcoal ash
- Dairy products
- Diseased or insect-ridden plants
- Fats, grease, lard, or oils
- Meat or fish bones and scraps
- Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)

DIY:

Create a 3-to-4-foot-wide “cage” out of chicken wire, welded wire or plastic gardening fencing. Place the compost cage in a corner of your garden, so that the nutrients carried by rainwater will feed vegetables planted nearby. If you don’t want to build your own cage, there are many commercial compost tumblers available. You can keep a container under your sink for your kitchen waste and add it to the compost cage regularly.

EHS COUNCIL MEETING

The Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Council, which is comprised of representatives from each of the divisions, will be meeting in New York on October 5th and 6th to discuss a number of EHS topics. This year’s meeting, though, is largely devoted to energy management and sustainability topics. We’ll report on the meeting in next month’s issue of the newsletter.