

Composting — kitchen scraps to garden health

BY MARY BINGMAN

Littleton Garden Club

Kitchen pre-composting bucket

Our tiny black bin sits hidden on the floor nearby where food is prepared. It gets a lot of use. Plentiful vegetables and fruits are consumed by us and we have many scraps that can be turned into compost. Acidic oranges and lemons don't get incorporated, but all other plant material, coffee grinds and tea bags are

used. The bin fills up rapidly; we empty it up to three times a week into the actual outdoor compost bin. We have charcoal filters in the lid to minimize any aromas originating from decomposing material.

Liners for kitchen buckets

Green liners are made of cornstarch and plant materials so they can break down over time. Purchased online at a reasonable price, we've enjoyed the ease of moving moist contents out side

when we need to.

The only down side of liners is that they are slow to break down. Small green remnants of the bags appear in garden areas up to a year after finished compost was spread.

That ends up being a minor inconvenience compared to the many overall benefits.

Joys of composting

It feels great to keep plant waste from our landfill and instead use it as a

natural fertilizer that improves soil structure and fertility.

It also encourages beneficial microorganisms. Sometimes earthworms come in large numbers to aerate the soil and make nutrients more available to plants. Earthworms are such a welcome sight for a gardener!

Winter-times

During snowy, icy times of winter, we pause com-

LGC, PAGE A5

posting. Safe access to the outdoor bin becomes an issue. It's also more difficult to complete the necessary turning of the bin contents in that season. Providing aeration is an important part of the whole process.

Bears

Our large outdoor compost bin has a secure lid and is considered bear-resistant. Nonetheless, we learned that spreading lime or wood ash over fresh additions can mask odors to keep curious bears away. The thick plastic container does have a few bear claw marks, but no critters have gotten inside.

Roses

Compost applied around roses makes such a difference in growth. My 'Magnificent' Grandiflora rose blooms multiple times per season since regular composting became a routine.

This simple practice helps with the blooms. Compost releases nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium slowly as it decomposes. The organic matter and micro nutrients are claimed to be more beneficial than synthetic fertilizers.

Benefits

Compost increases the yield and flavor of vegetables by ensuring a steady supply of nutrients and moisture. It is an organic

solution and is powerful to know that composting kitchen scraps transforms everyday waste into a natural resource that sustains a healthy, productive garden.

Maybe you will consider the benefits that composting offers.

Littleton Garden Club is very active in the community. We welcome new members from around the area. Visit our Web site to learn more: <https://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org/>.