1.

Composting Toilets for Water Conservation

Keywords: waterless toilet, biological toilet, composting toilet, composting toilets, water conservation, carbon footprint

Abstract: Anyone who is environmentally conscious, even in the least, has water conservation on the mind to some degree. It is no secret that we squander our clean drinking water, but how do we make a change?

When I was growing up conservation and preserving our environment actually meant something. It seems like since that time humanity has lost touch with the environment, myself included. Convenience has become more important that conservation. It is more convenient to put your garbage in one bag than it is separate your garbage into three for four bags like they do in Europe. It is more convenient to flush your toilet rather than compost your waste, or is it? It is no more difficult to use a composting toilet than a flush toilet, but I believe that there is a perception that composting toilets are not hygienic since your waste does not disappear down the drain. If used properly a composting toilet is very clean and hygienic. The great benefit of composting toilets is the amount of water it conserves; it does not require any water. The average flush toilet uses between 4 and 6 gallons of clean water per flush and in the average North American household 100,000 gallons of water are flushed down the toilet every year. Multiply that by the number of households in North America and you start to get a feel for how much water we are wasting.

Saving water is not the only benefit of having composting toilets. When the composting process has finished you can use the compost in your garden (if your local and state laws allow it) to grow more colorful flowers and more nutrient rich fruits and vegetables. When you use a composting toilet you are also reducing your impact by no longer contributing to a growing problem: ground water contamination. Our current sewage systems are not the most efficient systems in the world and they leak. Sometimes lines break and huge amounts of grey water enter the water table. With a composting toilet your waste starts and ends right where you live. The composting toilets are designed so that once the process is complete all potentially pathogenic microbes are immobilized and destroyed and you are left with nutrient rich soil.

The idea of composting toilets takes some getting used to and if their use becomes more widespread they may just be the water savior we have been looking for.

2.

Composting Toilets: How They Work

Keywords: waterless toilet, biological toilet, composting toilet, composting toilets, how composting toilets work, carbon footprint

Abstract: Composting toilets are clean, hygienic and easy to use. You can save enormous amounts of water by composting your waste rather than flushing it.

Most people in Western Society would be surprised to find out that there are a variety of composting toilet on the mainstream market. I am pretty sure most people have never even heard of composting toilets; however that may soon change. Composting toilets have the potential to save North Americans up to 100,000 gallons of toilet flush water per year and if you live in an area where you have to pay for your water by the gallon or cubic foot, you’ll be saving a lot of money by using composting toilets.

You may have guessed it already, composting toilets compost human waste. You may be a little disgusted by that, but keep in mind that before the very recent invention of sewer treatment plants every human on earth composted their waste one way or another; either by leaving it in the woods so that nature could compost it or by composting it on their property so that their gardens could benefit. A properly functioning composting toilet is very hygienic and it will destroy all pathogenic microbes in the human waste during the composting process.

Composting toilets have four main components:

<ol>

<li>To minimize the release of water vapour, odor and carbon dioxide there is a <b>screened exhaust system</b></li>

<li>To let the excess liquid (leachate) drain out of the compost there is a <b>drainage system</b></li>

<li>A <b>composting reactor</b> is where the composting takes place</li>

<li>To remove the finished product (or humus) there is an <b>access door</b></li>

</ul>

There are usually two composting reactors. One is used until it is full and then the second is used while the first one is allowed to compost. After the first one is emptied it can be used again while the second one composts.

If there are regulations in your area which do not allow you to use the humus from composting toilets in your garden then you will have to call a licensed seepage hauler to empty your composting toilet. It is a small price to pay for enormous water savings. We all have to do our part.

3.

Eco-Toilet: Portable Composting Toilet

Keywords: waterless toilet, biological toilet, composting toilet, eco-toilet, portable toilet

Abstract: Eco-toilets are a great way to safely compost your waste while you are away from traditional toilet facilities. Eco-toilets are especially useful in disaster preparedness and camping trips.

I have been out in the woods many times while getting the urge to empty my bowels. So, I had to find a place to do the deed and I had to find some leaves to help with the clean up. Then, out came the shovel to dig a nice little hole for my personal composting pile; small price to pay for enjoying the great outdoors. Now there is something even better. It is an Eco-toilet, also called environmentally friendly toilets. Eco-toilets are a portable version of composting toilets. It comes in the shape of a toilet seat, a shape which we have all grown accustomed to. You put a biodegradable bag into the eco-toilet, do your deed (hopefully you remember toilet paper) and you save the bag until you get home where you put it into your compost pile. It takes about 40 days for the bag to decompose.

These eco-toilets can be taken along for long road trips through areas where rest stops are few and far between. I am willing to bet that it will cut down on speeding. I have often noticed that the speed I drive is proportional to how badly I have to visit the little boy’s room. Now, I take the washroom along for the trip and my driving is much comfortable. Also, eco-toilets are often recommended as part of a disaster preparedness kit.

If used properly, eco-toilets help lower your impact on the environment by decreasing your need to use traditional flush toilets, which use four to six gallons of clean water for every flush.

4.

Home Water Conservation: Composting Toilets

Keywords: waterless toilet, biological toilet, water conservation, composting toilets, composting toilet

Abstract:

Composting toilets are one way you can conserve more water at home (composting toilet systems have also been developed and successfully implemented in high traffic areas like schools and offices). There is lots of opportunity for you to conserve water in your home. Some of the options are more involved than others, but they are a small price to pay for the environment.

First, let me clarify the problem, which borders on an exercise in futility. We have clean, treated water pumped into our homes for our use. In some places, residents have to pay for the water (either by volume or a flat monthly fee) and in some places the water is still free. We use the clean, treated in our showers and baths to clean ourselves, in our toilets to remove our waste, in our washing machines to clean our clothes, in our kitchen to clean our hands, our dishes and our food, and in the garden water our plants and lawns. There are countless other ways we use clean water at home, but I want to keep this article manageable.

The major waste is most often the shower. Hands up everyone who has stood in the cozy hot shower and just let the water run all over you just because it felt good. Pretty much everyone has at one point or another and it is a BIG waste. When you design your home and you can actually have the shower run-off (which is often called grey water because it is no longer clean) be used in your irrigation system. The water used in your sinks can be reused the same way. The water is run through a filter to remove chemicals like soap and hair conditioner before it is used for the irrigation. You may also want to install low flow fixtures in your showers and aerators in your faucets to further decrease water use.

Flush toilets are another major waster. A regular toilet uses about 4 to 6 gallons of clean water for one flush (which adds up to about 100,000 gallons of water being flushed by the average North American family every year). You can install low flow toilets to reduce the amount of water used and ff you use composting toilets in your home you will be using zero gallons of water per year to flush. You can find composting toilets on the main stream market in North America, although most people do not know about them. They are very clean and hygienic when used properly and provide you with nutrient rich humus that you can add to your garden to make it healthier.

You can also do some work on the irrigation system itself. Drip irrigation systems are much more efficient that the traditional spray systems. With the drip system there is an outlet at the roots of every plant. The water slowly drips out and goes directly to the plant rather than being in accurately sprayed by spray irrigation.

5.

Worm Composting: Making the Bedding

Keywords: Composting worms, worm composting, vermiculture, vermicomposting, bedding for worm composting

Abstract:

Using composting worms is a great way to increase the turn-around time of your compost. The worms eat the compost that you add to the pile and then produce nutrient-rich castings for your garden. The worms live in an area of the composting pile called “bedding”, which makes up the majority of the compost pile by volume. You will have to create the bedding for your worms, but do not worry, it is easy to do. Here is a list of things that make great bedding:

<ul>

<li>Shredded newspaper or cardboard</li>

<li>Saw dust</li>

<li>Shredded, fallen autumn leaves</li>

<li>Dead plants</li>

<li>Mature compost</li>

<li>Aged manure</li>

</ul>

Using just one of those ingredients to make your bedding is not the best idea. Ideally, you would a bit of everything. The finished bedding should take up about three quarters of your compost bin; that is right, 75%. It may seem like a lot, but the worms need a place to live.

The bedding must be moist (like a wrung-out sponge) and you will want to cover your compost bin to reduce evaporation. Make sure the bedding is loose with lots of pockets of air because the worms need air to survive.

Now that your bedding is finished you can add the worms. For every pound of compost you plan on adding per day you will need two pounds of worms (roughly 2000 worms). You should be able to buy them at your local garden store or from a farmer. You may even have a friend who can give you some worms to get you started. Once they are settled into your compost bin they multiply rapidly, but you will want to stick to the 1 pound of compost to 2 pounds of worms rule. That means, if you do not have two pounds worms you have to reduce the amount of compost you add every day. It is tricky measure how many worms you have, you will have to go buy how much compost they can consume. If you find that your worms cannot keep up to the amount of compost you are adding you will have to reduce your daily compost addition. You will get a feel for it after a while.

6.

Efficient Composting: 5 Key Things You Must Do

Keywords: Composting, how to compost, compost how to, compost bin size, turning compost, ammonia smell in compost pile

The dream of every backyard compost pile is to take the organic waste that you provide it and use it to produce nutrient-rich compost for your garden. But the compost pile will need your help to realize that dream. There are 5 key aspects that have to be maintained for your compost pile to work efficiently.

First, observe the fifty-fifty rule. Try to keep the ratio of carbon-based organic material to nitrogen-based organic material at 1:1. Did I hear someone say, “how the bleep do I know what is carbon-based and what is nitrogen-based?” As a rule of thumb, brown material is carbon-based and green-material is nitrogen-based.

Second, aerate your compost four to five times per season. Do so using a pitch fork, shovel or garden hoe. The cool thing about bacteria is that most of them can survive if there is air present or not. The bacteria live via Aerobic Respiration when there is air present and through Anaerobic Respiration when there is little or no air. So, if all you want your compost pile to do is break down your kitchen waste and make it disappear you do not have to turn the pile. However, the byproducts of anaerobic respiration are often toxic whereas aerobic respiration in the compost piles creates benign compounds. For the sake of your health and breathable air please turn your compost pile. You will know it is time when it starts to smell like ammonia.

Third, every organism on the planet needs water. Keep your compost pile moist (like a wrung out sponge). If you add too much water you risk drowning the bacteria and worms (if you are vermicomposting).

Fourth, cut up and shred anything you put into your compost pile. This increases the surface area and makes decomposition go much more quickly. If you freeze your kitchen scraps before you put them into your compost pile it will make the process go even more quickly. Freezing ruptures the cell walls (water expands as it freezes and at the microscopic level is very jagged and sharp and it can cut through cell walls easily).

Fifth, and finally, keep a lid on your compost bin volume. It is much easier to maintain two or three smaller bins instead of one really large on. Also, if the compost pile is too big enough air will not reach the center and if the bin is too small it will not retain enough heat. Keep your bin between 3 feet cubed (3ft x 3ft x 3ft or 1m x 1m x 1m) and 5 feet cubed (1.6m x 1.6m x 1.6m).

To recap, the 5 factors you have to keep an eye on when composting:

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<li>50-50 Rule</li>

<li>Keep it Aerated</li>

<li>Keep it Moist</li>

<li>Cut up or Shred anything you place in the compost bin</li>

<li>Cap the bin volume</li>

</ul>

7.

Compost, why should I?

Keywords: composting, landfills, composting toilets, composting toilet, compost

Abstract: We face two major problems right now, today; water shortages and overflowing landfills. Nobody seems to be doing anything about it, but in this article you will learn how each individual can do their part.

I’ll tell you why, because we as a people are standing on the edge of cliff. Sometimes, I look around and think, “there are 6 billion of us on this planet. What am I, as one person, going to be able to change?” I then have to remind myself that I can change what I do and if that change is positive it can affect change in the people around me. That is the best I can hope for, the worst I can hope for is peace of mind created by helping our environment. That’s a pretty good worst case scenario. Let’s go over some other scenarios.

Our landfills are nearing capacity (13 states in the US will fill all of their capacity within the next 10 years). Our landfill management consists of throwing everything in a big pile and then burying it. As you know, there is a lot of organic matter in landfills. I used to think that it was like a giant compost pile and everything will be fine; boy was I wrong. For a compost pile to work properly all parts of it must have access to oxygen, that is why you should turn your compost pile at 4 to 5 times each season. When bacteria have access to oxygen they use a process called Aerobic Respiration to decompose the organic matter. This process produces the wonderful humus that you can use as natural fertilizer in your garden. On the other hand, when bacteria do not have access to air they use a process called Anaerobic Respiration. This process also leads to the decomposition of organic material, but it produces toxic byproducts like ammonia. This is what happens in a landfill when the garbage is buried. Then the toxic compounds seep into the ground water and surrounding lakes, which, as you can imagine is a bad scene. If you are compost, you are doing your part to reduce the amount of organic waste in the landfills and that is a good scene.

Most people in the Western world waste amazing amounts of water year. Somewhere to the tune of 100,000 gallons of water per year is flushed down the toilet by an average American family. That is a lot of clean water. You can reduce that waste substantially, even to the point where you are not using any water to flush the toilet. You can use low-flow toilets reduce the wasted water or composting toilets to eliminated the use of water all together. Here is the crazy cycle of toilet waste that we spend billions of dollars on. You use clean water to flush your toilet. The formerly clean water is delivered to a giant pool with other people’s formerly clean water. Then, we try to make the formerly clean water clean again and we spend lots of money doing it. Any system that traverses large areas of land, like a sewage system, has the potential to leak or spill sewer and that often happens. This costs further ridiculous amounts of money to clean up and potentially hazardous conditions for anyone living near a leak or a spill. Now, imagine a toilet that uses no water, costs you a few hundred dollars and does not send sewage across town. That is a composting toilet. The idea takes some getting used to, but basically you compost your own waste into nutrient-rich, non-odorous, non-pathogenic humus to be used in your garden (some areas do not allow you to use this sort of humus in your garden so check the local and state laws) or taken away by a license seepage hauler.

The amount of garbage we bury in our landfills and the amount water we flush down our toilets is a snowballing problem that can easily be solved on the individual level. The government sanctioning large tracts of land for landfills and sewer treatment plants is not the answer. The answer starts with you; the answer starts with composting.

8.

Composting Saves Everyone Money

Keywords: composting, landfills, compost, waste clean up, recycling,

Abstract: All systems in nature are in an equilibrium with each other, that is why the world was able to survive so long. Humans do not create equilibriums, we disrupt them and that is why we are facing so many problems today.

If you spend any time at all in nature you will quickly notice that nature takes care of itself. Everything that dies is incorporated back into the environment in a short amount of time. There are natural checks and balances that allow nature to keep functioning in an equilibrium where nothing is wasted and nothing is gained. Of course, a natural disaster will disturb or even destroy the equilibrium, but a short while later, a new, different equilibrium will be established and the disaster is forgotten. In actual fact, it is only humans that call them “disasters” because they cause us major problems, where as nature welcomes them as a way to rejuvenate. Forest fires; for example, are a normal part of a healthy forest. We humans do not like forest fires, so we stop them from happening. This causes a buildup for organic matter in forests and eventually we have a real doozy of a forest fire to make up for the all the little ones that we foiled. The point being, we have found a way to foil the equilibriums of nature and structure things in a ways that are convenient to us.

Take, for instance, the massive piles of garbage that we have in our civilized nations. Researchers have found that big cities and large animal-raising facilities waste enormous amounts (tons) of natural resources every day. This valuable resource is then shipped away to some place and thrown in a pile or thrown into a lake or the ocean. Not only that, huge amounts of money are spent on the handling, transport, treatment, and discarding of this waste. Then, after this “waste” begins to contaminate the environment we spend huge amounts of money on clean-up efforts. What’s the alternative? Spend money on a solution to the problem rather than spending money on haphazardly getting rid of the organic waste and then spending money on the cleanup efforts. In short, compost the natural resources.

It would have to be a municipal or state initiative and it could (no exaggeration) change the world if enough of the world is on board. Here’s how I imagine it working. Giant compost facilities should be built in major urban centers and near any place that generates a large amount of compostable material. These compost facilities buy the organic material from the cities and animal raising compounds who want to get rid of it. The composting process creates humus which is then sold to farmers to use in their fields. The farmers can then reduce their reliance on artificial fertilizers that pollute our world and possibly cause genetic mutation in humans (the effects of which we will not see for at least 2 generations).

Obviously, these problems require a multi-faceted approach, but composting can be one of those facets. The difficulty with making changes at the government level is that there are a lot of hoops to jump through and a lot of red tape slowing down change. For the individual, like you and me, change can happen in one day. Today you can be throwing organic waste into the garbage and literally tomorrow you can be composting it.

9.

6 Must-Know Composting Tips to Get You Started

Keywords: composting tips, compost, composting, compost tumblers, compost pile

Abstract: These 6 tips will get any composting beginner off the right foot. If you want to start a compost pile you definitely will want to read this article.

Managing an efficient compost pile is an art. You will run into problems sooner or later on your road to becoming a composting extraordinaire. The following is a list of 6 tips that every good composter should know.

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<li>Keep a close eye on the temperature of your compost pile; it should be warm, but not hot. Try to maintain the temperature between 40 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. On the rare occasion a compost pile can become so hot that it spontaneously combusts. On the other hand, if the compost pile is too cold it will take forever for your compost to mature.</li>

<li>The moisture level of the compost pile is important. It should feel about as moist as a wrung-out sponge. If the compost is too dry add water and if it is too wet try to physically raise it (this should have been a consideration when you first built your compost pile) so that the excess liquid can drain out of the bottom</li>

<li>Cut up or shred anything you put into your pile for composting. This will increase the surface area of the fresh organic matter helping it to decompose more quickly</li>

<li>Aerate your compost pile 4 to 5 times each season. This prevents anaerobic decomposition which can produce toxic byproducts. You will know it is time to aerate when your composter starts to smell of ammonia </li>

<li>Keep the ratio of Greens to Browns at about 25:1. Greens are carbon-based organic matter and Browns are nitrogen-based organic matter.</li>

<li>Do not dump your fresh lawn clippings onto your compost pile. Instead spread the clippings over the pile and mix them under or spread the grass clippings on the lawn and let them dry before you add them to pile. If you do not do either of these the fresh, wet clippings will clump together and remove oxygen from the compost pile possibly leading to anaerobic decomposition which leads to toxic byproducts</li>

</ol>

10.

Compost Troubleshooting Part I

Keywords: composting tips, compost, composting, compost tumblers, compost pile, compost temperature, compost ammonia

Abstract: During the time you have a compost pile you will more than likely run into a problem or two. Don’t be discouraged because compost problems usually have easy solutions. In this article will read about two common problems and their easy solutions.

A compost pile has to be healthy in order to efficiently decompose the compost that you add on a daily basis. There are many things that can happen to make your compost pile work inefficiently; you will find some of these problems with solutions explained below.

The temperature of your compost pile should be between 40 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. If the compost pile is too cold your compost will not mature this decade and if it the compost pile is too hot it may spontaneously combust. Although, the compost lighting on fire is a rare occurrence, it is not something you want to risk. To test the temperature just dig a fist sized hole into the compost and hold your hand inside. The air in the hole should be warmer than the outside air temperature, but it should not be too hot.

Here are some things you can do if your compost pile becomes too cold:

<ul>

<li>In the summer time, increase the compost pile’s exposure to direct sunlight</li>

<li>In the winter time, insulate the compost pile with regular insulating materials, or if you thought ahead you will have to a portable composter that you can move inside</li>

<li>You can raise the temperature by adding more greens (carbon-based organic matter); such as, news paper, straw or dry clippings.</li>

</ul>

If you find that your compost pile is too hot:

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<li>In the summer time, decrease the compost pile’s exposure to direct sunlight</li>

<li>Turn or Aerate the compost pile more often or split it up into separate piles. Make sure that you break up the center of the pile because that is where it will be hottest and if a fire is going to start that is where it will happen</li>

If your compost pile is starting to smell like rotten eggs (hydrogen sulfide) or ammonia the best way to deal with the problem is to turn the pile. Turn the pile every day for several days until the smell goes away. The odor is caused by the anaerobic respiration of bacteria in the pile, meaning they are not getting enough oxygen. Most bacteria can live both with and without oxygen, but they use different mechanisms to do so. When there is oxygen they use aerobic respiration which generates water and carbon dioxide as byproducts. This is what you want to be happening in your compost pile. When there is little or no oxygen the bacteria switch to anaerobic respiration creating hydrogen sulfide and ammonia as byproducts (both of which are toxic). This is what you do not want to be happening in your compost pile.

9 Flush Toilet Alternatives

Keywords: composting toilet, incinerating toilet, evaporating toilet, lagoon systems

Abstract: The flush toilet is ubiquitous in the western world and anything else just sounds wrong. I believe wasting 8 gallons of water with every flush is wrong, so find out about some alternatives to flush toilets.

Believe it or not, there are many alternatives to flush toilets. For anyone doing research on the topic there is a plethora of information on the internet detailing alternatives to flush toilets, septic sytems, and sewer hookup. The main reasons people would do this sort of research is to either save a few dollars or help preserve or environment, or both. Here is a list of flush toilet alternatives that you can do some further research on.

<ol>

<li>Microbiotic and Advanced Treatment Systems – These improve on traditional septic systems and take care of the waste onsite rather than sending it across town.</li>

<li>Chemical Toilets and Portable Toilets – Waste is collected in tanks that are pre-loaded with chemicals that kill pathogens and control odor. When the tank is full you have to call a licensed seepage hauler to empty the tank. These toilets are most often used in planes, trains, boats and RVs.</li>

<li>Holding Tanks – These are large tanks sunk into the ground that collect waste. When they are full the waste is pumped out and the tank is reused. These are often found at large public buildings, rest stops and public parks.</li>

<li>Digestor Tanks – These collect and break down waste and trash. They generate methane gas as a byproduct which can be used as fuel or to help create humus.</li>

<li>Evapotranspiration Systems – These put liquid waste on top of the open ground for evaporation and absorption by surrounding plants. This may not be the most hygienic way to go.</li>

<li>Composting Toilets – These collect waste and turn it into humus. Composting toilets are found in many households around the world.</li>

 <li>Incinerating Toilets – These have been seen in many-a Sci-Fi movie, but they are real. They burn waste leaving only ash.</li>

<li>Lagoon Systems – These are basically ponds that collect sewage. With time, solids settle to the bottom of the pond and the liquids evaporate. Lagoon systems are often found in small towns, resorts, recreation areas, and campgrounds.</li>

<li>Evaporating Toilets – These let liquids evaporate. Depending on the type of system they either reduce or eliminate the amount of waste that has to be pumped.</li>

</ol>

As you can see there are many alternatives to the flush toilet, but not all of them will be applicable to your needs. Determine your needs exactly and then find the right waterless toilet for the job.

3 Steps to Choosing a Flush Toilet Alternative

Keywords: composting toilet, incinerating toilet, evaporating toilet, lagoon systems

Abstract: There are many flush toilet alternatives. I have spent most of my years not giving flush toilets a second thought until I was clued in to how much clean water they wasted. Learn more about ways to conserve water using flush toilet alternatives.

You may ask, “why should I be researching an alternative to flush toilets?” That is an important question to ask. The first reason is that regular flush toilets use up to 8 gallons of water for every flush and that is not helping a growing water shortage problem. Low-flow toilets help address the problem, but waterless toilets go one step further. Clean water is still wasted in many ways, but at least the waste from your toilet is eliminated. Another problem is that waste treatment plants in large cities are no longer able to handle the amount of sewage that is being sent to them. There are ways that individuals like you and I can help. Here is a quick list of flush toilet alternatives:

<ol>

</li> Evapotranspiration System</li>

<li>Advanced Septic and Microbial Septic Systems</li>

<li>Composting Toilets</li>

<li>Evaporating Toilets</li>

<li>Chemical (Portable) Toilets</li>

<li >Incinerating Toilets</li>

<li>Holding Tanks</li>

<li>Lagoon Systems</li>

<li>Digestor Tanks</li>

There are three factors you have to consider before you decide which toilet system to go with. First, and most importantly, is the system the right one for your situation? Some of the systems are not allowed in certain areas, so check the local codes (in most cases you will be able to get a waiver if you request one). Some systems will be too small for your needs and some will be too large. Some systems cannot hold up to freezing and others have to be used on a constant basis (not good if you need it for a summer cabin). There are a lot of things to consider, but having a list of your requirements will help you find the right match.

The second factor is initial cost. The best thing to do is get a quote from a contractor who factors in labor and materials (sand or gravel for example). For instance, if you are putting in a septic system you have to consider the length of the leech lines. The more anticipated waste the longer the leech lines have to be and higher the cost will be.

The third factor is operational costs. These usually fall into three groups: power, chemicals and maintenance. Know what you are getting into before you get into it. The flush toilet is convenient in that the waste just disappears down the drain and you can forget about it. Most non-flush systems require some work at one point or another.

Herbal Compost Activators

Keywords: compost, composting, herbal compost activators, herbal activators, organic gardening

Abstract: Herbal Compost Activators are a great way to help increase the productivity of your compost heap.

You may have heard about <b>herbal compost activators</b> or perhaps you have not. Either way, they help your compost pile rapidly produce compost for you to use in your garden. If you find that your compost is taking forever to mature you can add some of the following to give it a jolt.

<ol>

</li><b>Comfrey</b> (<i>Symphytum officinale</i>) is rich in calcium, potassium, nitrogen and phosphates. Its leaves are hairy and they break down quickly. This provides a nutrient influx for the inhabitants of your compost heap.</li>

<li><b>Valerian</b> (<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>) has the ability to attracts earthworms. Why? Who knows? But having earthworms in your compost pile helps your compost mature more quickly. After Earthworms eat the organic matter in your compost pile they leave their nutrient-rich castings which are great for your garden. The leaves of Valerian are also very nutrient rich.</li>

<li><b>Dandelions</b> (<i>Taraxacum sp</i>) are rich in iron, copper and potash. All three of which are excellent for keeping your compost pile healthy. Not only that, but now you have a place to put those pesky dandelions when you pull them out of your lawn.</li>

<li><b>Yarrow</b> (<i>Achillea sp</i>) has a big impact on your compost pile, even if you only add it in small amounts. It provides nitrates, phosphates, potash and copper.</li>

<li><b>Tansy</b> (<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>) concentrates the potassium from the soil where it grows. When you add Tansy to your compost pile you are adding loads of potassium, which is great for your hard working worms and bacteria. </li>

</ol>

The great thing about herbal compost activators is that they are an all natural way of getting your compost pile steaming along at high efficiency. However, these plants cannot save your compost from everything. For example, if your compost pile is too cold then no matter how many herbal compost activators you add, it will not increase production until the temperature increases.