



Sustainability Newsletter

April 2014

Backyard Composting Pilot Program—Coming Soon!

Did you know that RDBN residents throw out more than an estimated 500kg of waste per person every year? Approximately 1/3 of that waste is compostable organic material (food scraps and yard waste), which is equivalent to 186 litres – a bathtub full!

Composting your food scraps and yard waste can not only reduce your overall waste generation, but can decrease the smelliness of your garbage (and less trips out to the garbage can!), reduce greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing organic matter in the landfill and produce an incredibly nutritious supplement for your garden, eliminating the need for store-bought fertilizer.

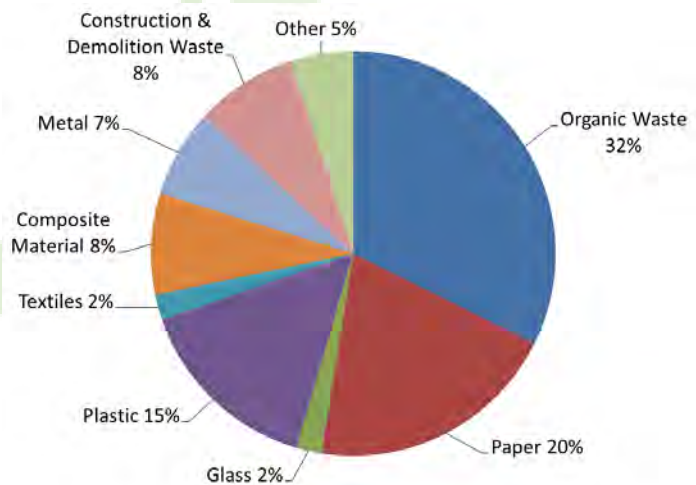
This May, the RDBN will be launching a backyard composting pilot program, which will provide composting workshops to residents, along with the opportunity to purchase a limited number of subsidized compost bins and mixing tools. Residents will be asked to pre-register for the workshops, to be held throughout the RDBN.



In this issue:

- Backyard Composting Program Coming Soon!
- Gardening Season 2014
- Make the Switch from Disposable to Reusable
- The Many Uses of Coconut Oil
- Juicing Recipes

Household Waste Composition in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako



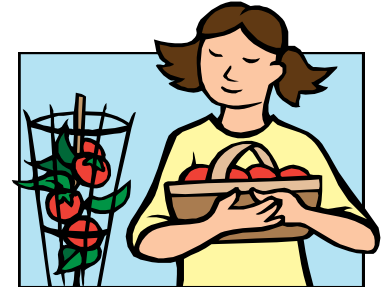
Stay tuned for compost program launch dates and locations!



Details will be announced on our Facebook page "Sustainable RDBN".

Gardening Season 2014

Growing your own food can be a very rewarding experience. With the 2014 gardening season around the corner, it's time to start planning what you'll be growing. Before we know it, the weather will be warm enough to get started! To make sure your garden is the most productive and healthy it can be, try some of these tips this Spring.



What to Plant and When to Plant?

Vegetables that have longer growing season needs should be started indoors as early as the beginning of April. For Northern climates, vegetables that mature in 60 days or less are the best choice. Some examples of early starters include onions, squash and zucchini. If you have a greenhouse, it is wise to start your tomato, cucumber and pepper seeds indoors as well. Carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes, peas, spinach and lettuce seeds can typically be planted right into the garden. In the RDBN, frost events often still occur up to the first week of June, so be sure to wait until all chance of frost is gone before you plant your seeds and seedlings outdoors.

Seed Starters

Plastic seed starter kits can be bought at gardening centres and hardware stores—but there is a cheaper, more environmentally friendly alternative potentially lurking in your fridge! Paper egg cartons are perfect for starting your seeds indoors. Follow the instructions below to make your own.



Materials:

- Paper egg carton, lid removed
- Potting Soil
- Plastic Tray/container
- Water
- Seeds
- Scissors

Instructions:

1. Remove the top of the egg carton.
2. Poke holes in the bottom of each egg cup in the paper egg carton.
3. Moisten the potting soil with water: put soil in a large bowl and add water, mixing with your hands or wooden spoon.
4. Fill the egg cups with potting soil. Place the egg carton into the plastic tray.
5. Plant your seeds in the egg cups, following the depth guidelines on the seed packets.
6. Make sure to label the egg cups to identify the different types of vegetables you've planted. Lightly water the egg cups.
7. To help maintain moisture, cover the plastic tray with saran wrap, poking venting holes in the top.
8. When the seedlings are ready for the garden, just cut the cartons into individual cups, and place them in the soil. The cartons will dissolve in the soil.

Seed Growing Basics

Watering

When the top of the soil looks dry, water carefully using a small watering can with a fine spray. Spray bottles work well too. Avoid overwatering, which can lead to fungus growth.

Fertilizer

When seedlings have two sets of leaves, start feeding them with a fertilizer (20-20-20) at half strength once a week, working up to full strength after a few weeks.

Light

Place your seed starter tray near a bright window, or under grow lights/cool fluorescent tubes. Keep seedlings about 8-10cm away from the light source.

Bring Seedlings Outside

Seedlings grown indoors must be "hardened off" before being planted in the garden. After the last frost date, start putting the seedlings outside in a shady sheltered spots, initially for a few hours, then working up to a full day.

Make the Switch from Disposable to Reusable

Silicone Muffin Cups instead of Paper Liners



There are a number of more environmentally friendly alternatives for commonly used items. Paper muffin cups are a good example. They can only be used once, and must be thrown into the garbage. Silicone muffin cups provide a great alternative and can be used again and again, for more than just muffins. Silicone muffin cups, along with other silicone bakeware options, can be found at many retail stores. They come in a variety of sizes and shapes, are non-stick, and can be used simply to line a muffin tin or can be placed on a cookie sheet. They can be put into the oven up to temperatures of 425 ° F. In addition to making muffins and cupcakes, consider using silicone muffin cups in the following ways:

- Make egg “muffins”. Mix eggs, meat, cheese and minced veggies of your choice and bake them in the silicone cups.
- Use them as popsicle or jello molds.
- Use them to freeze individual portions. Once frozen, the food can be easily popped out of the molds.

Ceramic Plates instead of Paper Plates



Paper plates are often the dishware of choice at parties and picnics. Unfortunately, they are not good for the environment. Although forest management practices are becoming more sustainable, much of the pulp used to make paper plates comes from virgin wood. Additionally, used paper plates cannot be recycled because they are contaminated with food residue.

Though ceramic plates require more energy and resources to be manufactured, they last much longer than disposable plates, balancing out the initial environmental costs, and are therefore a much better choice. If you must use disposable dishware, opt for plates made from a certain percentage of post-consumer recycled material. Washable, lightweight plastic dishes are a good option for picnics that can be used multiple times.

The Many Uses of Coconut Oil

Coconut oil is made by pressing the natural oil out of coconut meat. Although historically thought unhealthy due to its high saturated fat content, research has shown that coconut oil, primarily non-hydrogenated forms, may be a source of healthy fats. Coconut oil can be used in a multitude of ways, from cooking and baking to using it as a moisturizer. Here are some of the many benefits:

- It is solid at room temperature and can have a shelf life of up to 2 years;
- It is great for sautéing and stir fries, as it has a high smoke point;
- It can be used in place of shortening or butter, and can be cut into flour to form pastry dough;
- It can be used as a body lotion, hair treatment, eye makeup remover, or diaper rash cream;
- It can be used to make homemade vapour rub by mixing 1/2 cup of coconut oil with a few drops of eucalyptus and rosemary oils to rub on the chest and throat.



Juicing Recipes

For those that do not enjoy eating many fruits and vegetables, juicing can be a great way to get those missing nutrients into your diet. Juicing extracts the liquid from fruits and vegetables, which contains most of the nutrients that eating the whole fruit/vegetable would contain. Juicing simply takes away the fibre. Most countertop juicers have a mechanism that separates the fibre (pulp), and pours out the resulting juice.

Commonly juiced fruits and vegetables include: apples, pears, oranges, lemons, limes, carrots, cucumbers, beets, spinach and kale. These ingredients, along with some add-ins, can be combined in a variety of ways to create delicious flavours. Here are some recipes for juicing “newbies”:



Green Juice

- 4-5 handfuls of spinach
- 1 large cucumber
- 1/2 small lemon (peeled)
- 1 apple (or pear)
- 1 carrot

Serves 1

Carrot Apple Ginger

- 3 carrots
- 1 apple
- 1 inch piece of ginger (peeled)
- 1/2 cucumber

Serves 1

What to do with all of that extra pulp?

Depending on what types of fruits and vegetables you used for your juice, there are endless ways you can use your leftover pulp. To use the pulp from each of your juice ingredients in different ways, just empty out the pulp after you juice that particular fruit/vegetable.

1. In spaghetti sauce
2. Save it to use for soup stock
3. Combine pulp with nuts/seeds to make crackers
4. Try this quick bread recipe:



Carrot Zucchini Loaf

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups zucchini or 1 1/2 cups carrots, grated
- 1/2 cup oil or 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup honey or 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 cup nuts, chopped
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Directions

1. Beat together oil and honey, then add eggs, vanilla and zucchini.
2. Sift dry ingredients and add to zucchini mixture.
3. Fold in nuts.
4. Bake in a greased 9" loaf pan at 350° F for 45 to 60 minutes.

