

Sustainability Newsletter

Ways to Improve Your Recycling

August 2016

A little R & R & R.... The phrase is so tired it almost might seem like “reduce, reuse, recycle” should go without saying. But maybe some have only really heard the last third of the phrase. They are ranked in order of importance, so consider this before recycling. Reducing the amount that we consume, and shifting our consumption to well-designed products and services, is the first step. Consider if you REALLY need to buy that item or perhaps there’s a higher-quality, longer lasting item that would be a wiser purchase. If you can find a way to repurpose an item, instead of just tossing it away, do that! If it’s broken, fix it, don’t replace it! If you can, return it to the producer (especially electronics). Or better yet, don’t buy any packaged goods. Tossing it in the recycling bin should be a last resort.

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Know what you can and can’t recycle! Read up on recycling rules for your area and make sure you don’t send anything in that can’t be processed.

Buy recycled! The essence of recycling is the cyclical movement of materials through the system, eliminating waste and the need to extract more virgin material. Supporting recycling means feeding this loop by not only recycling, but also supporting recycled products.

Encourage an artist! If you know someone interested in making art from recycled materials, offer to provide supplies. Many school children need items like paper towel tubes for art projects. Don’t forget, you can get your creativity on and re-purpose your recycled materials too!

Recycle your greenery! Composting is one of the simplest and most effective recycling methods. Both your garden cuttings and your green kitchen waste can go into an outdoor or indoor composter (with or without entertaining a population of worms). Composting food scraps will mean your regular kitchen wastebasket fills up more slowly and also won’t smell.

Little changes can make a big difference. Take note of the changes you can see as you implement reductions in your home, place of work or school. Maybe your trash can doesn’t fill up as fast or you’re taking more items to the recycling depot. If everyone does their part, we CAN make a difference!



Past issues are available online at: www.rdbn.bc.ca/environmentalservices/recycling/sustainability-newsletter

If you have any questions or suggestions about the content of this newsletter, please call Elaine Wiebe, Environmental Services Assistant for the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako at 250-692-3195, toll free: 1-800-320-3339, email: elaine.wiebe@rdbn.bc.ca

Seed Saving

Why save seeds? Saving seeds ensures that you'll always have seeds of your favorite variety. Saving seeds also is cost effective. It makes no sense to buy seeds that you can grow yourself. Saving seeds opens a whole new world of seed trading. At least half the vegetable varieties being grown today have no commercial sources.



Before ordering seeds from a catalogue was common, seed-saving from the backyard and trading with neighbours was a tradition that generations of gardeners followed to keep harvests plentiful. Back in the day, commercial seeds were simply not available; seed-saving was the only way to maintain a garden. By saving seeds from their best performing vegetables, gardeners and small-scale farmers developed varieties suited to

their specific tastes and environmental conditions. As they traded their seeds with neighbours and nearby villages, genetic diversity increased from one year to the next, resulting in thousands of varieties of edible plants.

Genetic diversity is nature's crop insurance system. When disease, pests, drought or wet weather overwhelm certain crops, a group of plants with genetic diversity will include individuals with unique unseen characteristics that will help them survive. As the climate changes, as bee populations diminish and plant diseases become more prevalent, it becomes increasingly important to have as much genetic diversity as possible to create a resilient food supply.

Beginner seed savers should start with beans, peas, lettuce, peppers and tomatoes. All of these plants are annuals, which means they produce seed in one season. They are also self-pollinating, creating seeds from one single flower, which reduces cross-pollination and results in offspring that look like the parent plant.

To save seed from any annual plant, allow the plant to mature beyond the eating stage. Lettuce will turn into a tall spike and radishes will get gigantic; both will start to flower. When the plant is brown and looks dead, collect the pods or seed heads that formed where the flowers were last seen.

Seed saving can be complicated or simple, depending on your knowledge or personal goals. It is a satisfying activity that increases the knowledge of your garden, creates your own crop insurance system and contributes to long-term food security.

Save the best! Plants from bigger seed tend to be more robust than plants grown from smaller seeds. Resist picking the earliest fruit to eat — mark them for saving and let them mature instead. If you see a plant that is producing many fruits, is especially tasty or has a great colour, mark the plant with a ribbon and save some of the seed.

Clean and Dry!

Ensuring the seeds are dry and clean of chaff and other plant parts is important for successful storage. Any moisture present in the seeds will encourage mold growth, which will damage the seeds and reduce germination.



Label and Store!

To store seeds for one winter, place seeds in a dry, cool room in containers such as paper envelopes, brown bags, glass canning jars or plastic or metal containers works well. For longer periods, seeds can be stored in the freezer.

Easy ways to save energy



Your home is plugged into nature. Nearly 60 percent of the energy used by Canadian homes is directly related to heating. Electricity in B.C. comes primarily from hydro-electric dams and burning fossil fuels. Each of these has environmental consequences — from air pollution and global warming to habitat loss.

- ⇒ Any electronic gizmo that has a clock, digital timer, remote control or standby mode is sucking energy when it's not being used (it's called 'phantom electricity' — and it's scary to think how much of it there is). If you're not using them, unplug them.
- ⇒ Set up a 'charging station' for equipment that needs charging — plug everything into a power bar and turn that off until you actually need to charge something.
- ⇒ Switch to compact fluorescent (CFL) or LED light bulbs. They're 75 percent more efficient than conventional bulbs.
- ⇒ Check walls, doors and windows for drafts and seal them up — up to 40 percent of heat loss is from these areas.

Don't limit your energy conservation to your home! Go green at work, too.

- ◆ Commute smarter: walk or cycle to work.
- ◆ If you must drive, carpool or car share.
- ◆ Save energy: if you're not using it, turn it off
- ◆ Plug equipment into power bars and turn them off until needed.
- ◆ Live healthier: take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ◆ Get rid of toxic cleaners and personal products in your office kitchens and bathrooms.
- ◆ Add plants to your workspace — they filter the air.
- ◆ Waste less: set 'double sided' as the default setting on your printer.
- ◆ Go electronic instead of using hard copies: phone and email, use powerpoint presentations, get e-subscriptions and use web resources.
- ◆ Switch to cloth towels and napkins in kitchens and bathrooms.
- ◆ Compost kitchen scraps.
- ◆ Conserve water: use less bottled water. Use a stainless steel commuter cup.
- ◆ Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge instead of running the tap.
- ◆ Don't pour water down the drain — use it to water plants.



Seasonal Eats: Zucchini

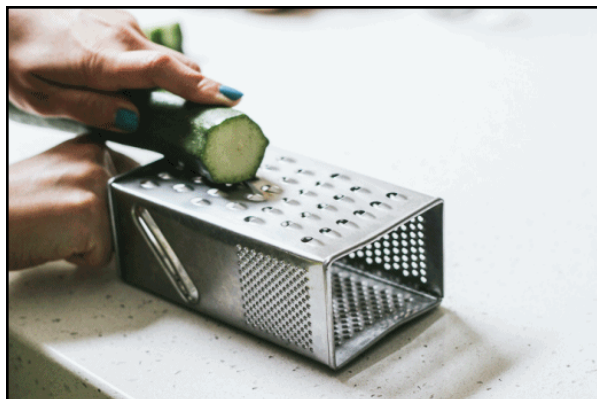
Zucchini sets a good example for everything else in the veggie garden - by demonstrating how to be prolific and bountiful! Zucchini is also a very healthy food containing abundant vitamin C (don't toss the peel though, that is the most nutritious part). Here are a couple of recipes that take advantage of this delicious and locally grown food source.

ZUCCHINI NOODLES WITH ARUGULA PESTO

INGREDIENTS

Pesto (makes enough for several servings)

- ◇ 4 cups packed arugula leaves (or try 1 1/2 cups arugula mixed with 2 1/2 cups of basil to make a milder version)
- ◇ 1/2 cup of walnuts or almonds
- ◇ 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- ◇ 3/4 cup of grated parmesan cheese
- ◇ juice from 1/2 a lemon
- ◇ 3/4 cup olive oil
- ◇ salt and cracked black pepper



Zucchini noodles can be made with a spiralizer or mandolin, but you really don't need fancy equipment. A veggie peeler makes nice fettucine-shaped noodles and you can make longer, thinner noodles using a grater, placed on its side (see photo below, left). Small to medium sized zucchinis make the best noodles...or are they zoodles?

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the greens, nuts, garlic and parmesan in a food processor and mix on low setting (or chop ingredients and then mix with a mortar and pestle). Slowly drizzle in olive oil and mix until the mixture resembles a coarse paste. Add salt and pepper to taste.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high with a few tablespoons of olive oil. Add zucchini noodles and toss them to coat in the oil.
3. Add a few tablespoons of the pesto mix (see step 1) and toss this with the zucchini noodles. Once the zucchini begins to take on color, it is ready to serve.

QUICK AND TASTY, LAYERED ZUCCHINI Recipe contributed by a busy Burns Lake gardener.

INGREDIENTS

- ◇ salsa (mild, medium or hot to taste)
- ◇ grated zucchini (include tender skin)
- ◇ grated mozzarella cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cover bottom of a baking dish with a layer of salsa.
3. Spread a layer of grated zucchini on top of salsa.
4. Top with grated mozzarella cheese.
5. Bake for 30 minutes or until bubbly.
6. Serve and expect requests for second helpings!!