

Down to Earth



White Pearly Everlasting in the front bed. PHOTO: JIM DAVIDSON

Organic Demonstration Garden

In my last article, I had the following questions about the upcoming season: what would become of the buckwheat and rodent-attacked cherry trees? What type of weather would we have? How many visitors and photographers would come to the garden?

The following phrase was often used at the garden: “the weather is rainy.” This spring, the wind howled in the open Demonstration Garden, we could barely walk on the wet beds for fear of soil compaction, and the wind affected the planting of seeds. By season’s end, certain plants were extra tall and some bloomed well.

We eventually planted all our usual vegetables, plus turmeric and sweet potatoes (as an experiment we treated them like a regular seed potato, not using slips). The Fletcher Wildlife Garden donated four valerians and Sandra offered her encouragement. We were able to donate almost 40 plants to Senior Organic Gardeners for garden projects.

Telsing’s donations saw morning glories come through, plus her welsh onions and alpine strawberries continue to do well. A couple of litchi tomatoes came back this year. We had small rodent issues in early summer. We

put up our netting a little late, and rabbits were attracted to the garden. Next year, we will put up the netting earlier.

The Gardener’s Celebration was excellent fun, thank you for your second appearance with us, Just Voices Choir, to Eleanor Willner-Fraser for playing the violin, to Lloyd and Margaret a big thank you, and also to all those who made it possible (especially the Sunday volunteers).

This summer, many visitors were interested in the garden. Brochures continued to be popular and the compost bin now has an instructions panel.

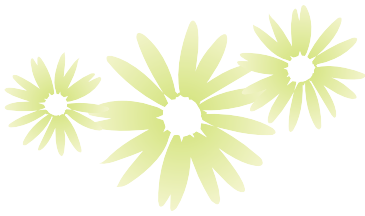
We tried out some new tools this past season, for example, a yellow-handled weeder and a stirrup hoe. The Friends of the Farm tool shed will be replaced this fall.

For our current and would-be volunteers, let’s re-introduce a list of “COG Demo Garden Tasks.” People will be able to plan their shifts accordingly. Volunteers will look ahead and see how much can be done and offer their suggestions.

Thank you for a great season!

Jim Davidson, COG Demonstration Garden Coordinator

E-mail: dr241@ncf.ca



Lots of colour in the bee and butterfly bed. PHOTO: JIM DAVIDSON



Prickly Pear flowering for the first time in 3 years.

PHOTO: JIM DAVIDSON

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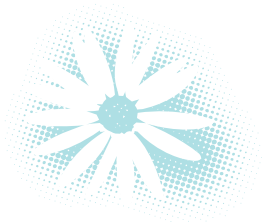
Eleanor playing the violin at the Gardener's Celebration.

PHOTO: DAVID TOWNSON



Just Voices Choir at the Gardener's Celebration.

PHOTO: DAVID TOWNSON



Editor's Corner

Full is the celebration of harvest and giving thanks. It is enjoying the beautiful colours that nature offers, reflecting on past seasons and planning next year's crops.

In this edition, we feature a Senior Organic Gardeners' celebration. We learn from Kayoki Whiteduck about his teas and why he follows organic production. The knowledgeable Rob Danforth shares his composting 101.

Enjoy the celebration of harvest, of collective gardening and of honouring the earth. Such benefit can come of working together, and overall, this edition is a celebration of community.

Let's rejoice in the season and happy reading!

Andrea Gartley

editordowntoearth@gmail.com

Coming Soon!

The Communications team at COG OSO is working on a new way to bring you chapter updates, organic news, and all of the ideas and information you look forward to on growing and eating organically.

Look for a revamped *Down to Earth* in your inbox beginning early December.

If you have comments or suggestions, we would love to hear from you!

Stephanie Pelot

Communications Lead

stephanie.pelot.beland@gmail.com

Growing Up Organic

Growing Up Organic (GUO) is a garden-based education program run through the Canadian Organic Growers Ottawa-St. Lawrence-Outaouais Chapter (COG OSO). We partner with schools to support school garden programs across grade levels. We provide tools and resources to promote experiential learning in an outdoor classroom.

This summer we partnered with the Ottawa Public Library to host two gardening workshops, connecting youth in Ottawa with school gardens. We discussed square foot gardening and the importance of food literacy programs for students in Ottawa. See article here: <https://bibliottawalibrary.ca/en/blogs/growing-organic-grandir-bio>

We recently started our fall workshops across Ottawa schools. These workshops are a great way to connect students with their spring gardens while applying math, language and arts in an outdoor classroom. The topics of our workshops include: harvesting, seed saving, and soils/composting.

School gardens and food literacy programs are gaining momentum across Ontario. We'll be speaking on a panel about partnerships with school boards at Sustain Ontario's Bring Food Home Conference on October 28th. For more information: <https://sustainontario.com/bring-food-home-2017#!event/2017/10/26/bring-food-home>.

GUO is celebrating our second year of partnership with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and looking forward to helping more schools grow! If you are a parent or teacher interested in starting a school garden, contact us to learn more about our programs: <https://cog.ca/ottawa/growing-up-organic/>, email guo-ottawa@cog.ca

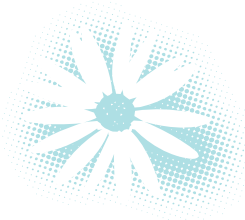


Seed saving at Cedarview Middleschool.

COG OSO thanks
Little Stream
Bakery



Friends of the
Environment
Foundation



Wabano seniors drumming after their poignant opening prayer. PHOTO: MICHAEL MATTHEWS



Senior Organic Gardeners say thank you to The Ontario Trillium Foundation!

Early September, a garden celebration was hosted by Senior Organic Gardeners (SOG) to thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation who make this magnificent program possible.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) awarded \$162,700 to SOG for 2016-18 and the brilliant results of the program were evident in the beautiful gardens that were featured during the celebration.

Norma Lamont, representing OTF, presented a plaque to Canadian Organic Growers Executive Director, Wayne Adams and SOG Manager, Adèle McKay. Adèle gave a thank you speech, welcoming guests in English, French, Algonquin, Farsi, Chinese, Arabic, and Spanish.

Nathalie Des Rosiers, MPP for Ottawa-Vanier and John Fraser, MPP for Ottawa-South, were present to speak to the value of community organizations such as SOG – a program of Canadian Organic Growers, the Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter. They celebrated the value of gardening, good food, the inclusion of different cultures, and the power of physical activity. They added their presence to the ‘moment of joy’ experienced on a glowing but windy afternoon.

The seniors from Wabano offered an opening prayer and performed a drumming song for all to enjoy. The celebration took place at Ottawa Community Housing, 800 St. Laurent and many of the senior gardeners enjoyed the occasion among their gardens! Seniors from other multicultural SOG gardening communities joined us as well.

Guests enjoyed organic food catered by Thyme and Again and music by the Jazz Duo Anouk-Michelle Gregoire and Greg Stone. Many guests remained to listen to the music, as the afternoon sun shone in the gardens.

An agency of the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is one of Canada’s largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities. www.otf.ca

Adèle thanking the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their generous grant, and thanking all of the seniors and partners for their participation.

PHOTO: MICHAEL MATTHEWS



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www.holzman.ca

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SOG Growing Season Report

SOG REACHED OUT to diverse multicultural communities, having an immensely successful growing season of 2017. Our six participating communities were: Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health; Ottawa Community Housing locations Clementine Towers, 300 Lacasse, and 800 St. Laurent; Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization; and the South Nepean Muslim Centre.

Microgardens and indoor seedlings started by the seniors were transplanted into outdoor gardens, as well as a huge array of seedlings obtained from various sources.

We planted veggies, herbs, and edible flowers such as: squash, Lebanese cucumbers, Lebanese zucchini, yellow and green zucchini, tomatoes of many varieties including “Indigo Rose”, peas, heirloom beans, onions, lettuce, heirloom cabbage, potatoes, peppers of many varieties, eggplant, a variety of herbs, nasturtiums, and borage.

Our SOG Program Manager, Adèle McKay, facilitated all gardening sessions with the seniors. Interactive seniors’ gardening committees were set up in each community. Camaraderie and joy were abundant as seniors gardened.

Workshops were held on permaculture, herbal teas, and plant medicines, and many experiences of gardening were shared throughout the summer. Language barriers were bridged through our language interpreters and many a story of plants from all corners of the world emerged.



Cherry tomatoes and mint, flourishing in a senior’s garden bed, at 800 St. Laurent, OCH.

PHOTO: BARB KOCH



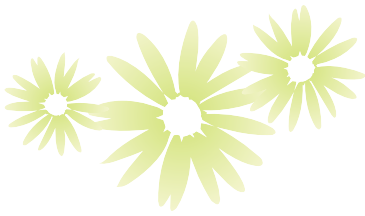
Tomato cultivar “Indigo Rose” thriving at the 300 Lacasse gardens, OCH.

PHOTO: ADELE MCKAY



Gardeners gathered on planting day at Clementine Towers, OCH.

PHOTO: MICHAEL MATTHEWS



SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2017

COG OSO Farm and Bakery Tour in Perth, Ontario

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS:
RAY PEARMAN, BARBARA KOCH AND GARY WEINHOLD

What a great event! This tour, organized by COG OSO, took place on a beautiful day in the countryside just west of Perth. It consisted of three visits: John Weatherhead's Waratah Downs farm, Graham Beck's Little Stream Bakery and Jeff and Joanne Greenberg's Greenwood Organics farm. All three are certified organic. More than 30 adults and children participated in the event.

WARATAH DOWNS

John Weatherhead who previously farmed near Iroquois, Ontario, established the Waratah Downs organic farm. John is originally from Australia, hence the name Waratah – a flower from Down Under. The farm was a bit rundown when purchased, with poor soil but no pesticide usage, which permitted him to certify it with Pro-Cert. It has 80 acres (32 hectares), of which 7 acres is for vegetables, 5 for hay and some pasture for cattle.

To improve the clay and loam soils he applied 4 tons per acre of purchased chicken compost, in addition to lime. Cover crops such as buckwheat are used as a nutrient source in the rotation cycle. Soluble fish meal and kelp are also applied to crops.

Twenty-five types of vegetables are grown in the fields and in a greenhouse built in 2015. Produce is sold at the Carp and Ottawa Lansdowne farmers' markets, as well as distributed through a CSA, with drop-off points for the latter in Perth and Ottawa (Kanata, Westboro and Old Ottawa South). CSA clients sign up online for 18 weeks starting mid-June. The CSA box contains a mix of the 25 vegetables, depending on availability, including some uncommon items such as celery and fennel.

John and two employees provide the bulk of the labour, supplemented by occasional volunteers. He finds it hard to get good local labour. Organic vegetable seeds are obtained from various sources including Johnny's Selected Seeds. It is sometimes a challenge to source certified organic seed; especially new cultivars such as Salanova lettuce, developed in Holland and originally unavailable as certified seed, but now available. <http://www.johnnyseeds.com/vegetables/lettuce/salanova-lettuce/>

This season, weeds have been a problem due to excessive rain. He uses plastic sheeting for weed control and extra heat for certain crops. He prefers to not rototill the soil as it produces a hard pan over time. Occasionally, he plows the land in sod, uses a disc extensively for land preparation, and has a ripper to loosen the subsoil and a tiller for potatoes.

We want to thank John for all the effort made in order to show us his farm. The volume of questions from participants indicated a high level of interest in this visit. To learn more, visit: www.waratahdowns.com



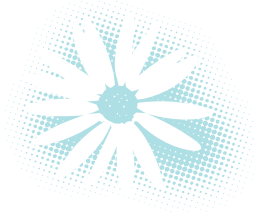
John Weatherhead explaining his crop rotation practices. PHOTO: DAVID TOWNSON



Graham Beck demonstrates the wood-fired oven at Little Stream Bakery. PHOTO: KAYLA KAZDA



Jeff explaining deer fencing. PHOTO: DAVID TOWNSON



LITTLE STREAM BAKERY

This visit took place at midday. The bakery is located in the hamlet of Glen Tay in the countryside west of Perth. Graham Beck, founder of this small, thriving, certified organic bakery, shared with us his pride in providing hand-crafted, naturally leavened sourdough breads, using traditional methods of stone ground flours, which are then baked in a large wood-fired brick oven.

We toured the flour mills and learned that the gluten-free bread he bakes uses a strict gluten-free protocol that includes a dedicated stone ground flour mill. Spelt, kamut, brown rice, quinoa and buckwheat are just some of the flours, besides wheat, that go into Little Stream's hand-crafted loaves.

Little Stream Bakery is also an ecologically responsible enterprise that generates sustainable electricity in combination with roof top panels which provide the majority of their hot water needs.

We enjoyed our relaxing lunch picnic style in the nearby shade of his lovely property. The timing of our informative bakery tour was perfect so that by the end of the day many of us delighted in the opportunity to purchase an assortment of freshly baked breads and treats.

We appreciate the fact that Graham personally showed us the bakery. For more information on where you can purchase these tasty baked goods in your area, visit: www.littlestream.com

GREENWOOD ORGANICS

The last stop on our tour was to Jeff and Joanne Greenberg's 57-acre farm nestled in the Tay Valley, just 20 minutes west of Perth. On 17 of these acres they raise goats, eggs from pastured hens, and certified organic vegetables.

In 2008, they retired from their corporate life, wanting to have control over what they ate and to know where their food was coming from. Eventually, they settled in their current location, a former dairy farm. They transitioned to becoming organic farmers, challenging but ever so rewarding, as they began to feed themselves as well as their community of friends and neighbours. A neighbour, Irene, helps out with the animals when needed, allowing them to leave the farm on occasion. Another benefit of community!

As we toured the property we met their flock of snow-white Saanen dairy goats, the friendly, free-roaming chickens that were busy scratching away in front of the barn. We also met a small group of diligent guinea fowl that act both as sentry to welcome guests and to sound the alarm for unwelcome marauding foxes or hawks. Who knew that guinea fowl are also particularly good at finding and feasting on ticks!

We were able to see and hear about the challenges of growing vegetables through drought and too much rain, and the importance of protecting crops from wildlife. A double electric fence deters deer since they have limited depth perception and won't jump over one fence if they see a second one.

Their 20' x 24' unheated greenhouse is an invaluable asset to starting the growing season early or to extend it in the fall. In the meantime, it houses some favourite varieties of tomatoes such as Indigo Rose.

Produce from the farm is sold through a CSA, Farm Gate Sales and the Perth Farmer's Market. For more information about their farm, visit: www.greenwoodorganics.ca

We want to thank all of our hard-working tour hosts and wish them well in all their endeavors during the remainder of the season. They deserve our profound respect since they grow tasty, healthy food for our plates. And to our readers, if you didn't make this one be sure to join the next farm tour!

Kayo-Tea

Being around the Elders and people at Kitigan Zibi, an Algonquin community north of Ottawa, gives you great appreciation for everything the earth provides. The ceremonies for thought, prayer and thankfulness linger into each new day and may very well be the source of my passion for organic tea and herb gardening.

Anibish-wabo is the word for tea in the Algonquin language and teatime, like in most cultures around the world is the best time of the day, a ceremony of sorts to soothe the soul. Tea is art, healing, nourishment, and a social moment that brings the world together.

As the herbal teas that I grow in the Gatineau Hills become more well known, people from Kitigan Zibi call me Anibishwabo innini "The Tea Man".

This year, I have harvested 23 different varieties of herbal tea from the garden. Mint tea is my specialty and I grow 12 different types that are sold through Mitigomin Agriculture, my small natural food company. The mint teas have very distinct flavour and when well prepared you can savour the chocolate, lemon, strawberry, grapefruit, or the pineapple flavours. Customers that buy the mint tea often have a specific food that they pair it with, and I love that they really appreciate the subtle flavours of the teas.

The really adventurous prefer the Agastache, catnip or bergamot teas, or my own blend such as extreme lemon: a mix of lemon verbena, lemon grass, lemon balm and sweet lemon mint.

Other customers are convinced of the medicinal properties of tea. These customers like to engage in discussion about the restorative effect of teas. I know they are right because my great grandfather Basil Dewache was well known and sought out for his medicinal knowledge of teas, herbs and plants. He was an herbalist who truly understood their natural healing power. I often think about the way he prepared his medicines and how meticulous he was about his craft.

A year of hard work and my year in the horticulture program at Camosun College, in Victoria, British Columbia has allowed my knowledge to grow. I have also studied as a tea sommelier and took a herbology course.

I ensure that there are absolutely no chemicals or pesticides used in or near the garden and buy my seedlings and plants only from organic nurseries in the region. I water the garden by hand, condition the soil with a mix of compost, leaf and grass clippings to ensure that the beneficial microbes and worms in the soil are not destroyed. Slowly harvesting and hand plucking the leaves ensures that the flavor of the tea is preserved.

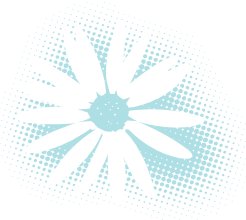
Harvest season reminds people of the old fashion ways, as I do not use any machinery for my business except for the transportation of my product.

Organic, for me, means being careful with production throughout all aspects until the final product is reached. I put a lot of research into finding the appropriate packaging made of organic material that composts quickly and does not harm the earth. The extra effort is worth it. Respecting the wisdom of the Elders, organic means taking care of the earth.

Kayoki Whiteduck, kpw7000@gmail.com



Kayoki pouring some of his herbal teas for seniors at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization. PHOTO: BARB KOCH



The DTE Notebook for the Urban Organic Vegetable and Herb Gardener - September 2017

BY ROB DANFORTH

Outdoor home composting harnesses nature's activities to produce readily available, low-cost, mostly organic, home grown soil amendment and garden fertilizer for all gardens from recycled raw kitchen and garden waste! Composting reduces curbside waste, and saves money since home-



grown compost quietly "cooks" in your yard and will nourish soils, improve soil structure, retain moisture, feed worms, and discourage cats and some insects. Also, if handled properly, a backyard composter will not smell.

COMPOST

- "Readily available" as it uses fresh fruit and vegetable kitchen waste, potting soil, and disease-free garden waste: vines, leaves, roots, weeds.
- "Low cost" refers to the initial compost container purchase and then your time and effort for the years to follow.
- "Mostly Organic" is the one drawback as home-grown compost will not be 100% organic. Unless you shop only for organic fruit and vegetables there will be some small amount of chemical residue getting into your compost (e.g. insecticides and/or fungicides in the wax on some non-organic fruit, the sprays on various non-organic vegetables, some systemic chemicals, and possibly some GMO products).
- "Soil Amendment" – compost will loosen soils to improve soil structure for air and water penetration. Without air at the roots, plants may drown in the resulting swamp.

- "Fertilizer" – Compost stores a large variety of nutrients (N. P. K. + trace minerals) and will nourish soil in all gardens: florals, shrubs, herbs, and vegetables. While nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) are very important for plant health, so are a multitude of trace elements such as zinc, calcium, magnesium, and sulfur to name only a few. Compost has it all.
- Although compost NPK numbers are low, compost continues to give day after day as a slow-release, non-burning soil nourishment which helps fight disease and balance soil pH.
- Best of all, you can compost year-round and you control the composition!

COMPOSTERS COME IN ALL SIZES, SHAPES, AND PRICES

In composting, you want to control the composition, access (your access to load, aerate, and unload, and to keep out wild things), mixture of ingredients, heat, air, and moisture. A covered container helps you do this.

The most effective and convenient urban composter for me has been a black plastic rectangle with the sleeve top cover containing two flip top doors, no bottom (allows nature's decomposing agents to enter), and a bottom exit door to access the finished compost.

The container will keep out the rain and the wind as well as all critters except raccoons, and for these, you need bungee cords or locking lids.

Technically, a composter should be filled to the top and allowed to "cook" while you aerate the pile and check periodically for heat, air, and moisture. This is necessary so you can make any needed adjustments. Some books will tell you to layer the compost ingredients, but for most urban gardeners this is not at all practical. Besides, aerating stirs the pile and destroys the layers.

RECOMMENDED INGREDIENTS FOR KITCHEN-FED COMPOSTERS

Shredded Browns (Carbon) – egg cartons, dried leaves (small amount), unmarked cardboard, brown paper, newsprint (no gloss or dyes), nut shells, tea leaves and bags, coffee grounds and unbleached filters, straw.



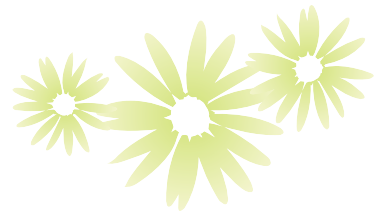
Pit



Wire



Wood Do-it-yourself



Left:
Roller-round-rectangle
Centre:
Sleeve top and flip doors
Right:
Metal rotator

Chopped Greens (Nitrogen) – raw vegetable, fruit (limited citrus) and flower, seed-free weeds, fresh grass clippings (modest amounts), garden clean-up waste (NB fresh fruit and grass clippings add water to the composter).

Crushed egg shells (calcium) – slow to break down and may appear unsightly but good addition – e.g. blossom end-rot in tomatoes and peppers results from inadequate moisture and insufficient calcium.

Compost activators – Garden soil (1 shovel full from time to time adds bacteria, fungi, insects, and microbes; especially good to cover fresh fruit and reduce the number of flies), old compost, comfrey leaves, stinging nettles, or chicken manure.

NB consider washing chemicals off non-organic fruit and vegetables before peeling to reduce waxes and sprays containing insecticides, fungicides, and anti-bacterial chemicals.

DO NOT INCLUDE

- Animal products (meat, bone, gristle, fat, grease, lard, butter, skin, giblets, feces, cheese, treated fur/hair, fish) – these need a very hot compost pile to break down safely as they contain harmful bacteria and attract rodents. Green bin this waste.

- Cooked food, oils, and table scraps that are salted or coated in butter/margarine/oil – (attracts rodents).
- Weeds or grass with seeds (seeds last a long time and will germinate after compost is used).
- Diseased plants.
- Paper that is glossy, bleached, or coloured with inks or dyes.
- Saw dust from treated wood (e.g. decks and fences may contain arsenic or copper sulphate).
- Wood ash if tainted by paint, varnish, creosote, fire starter/retardant chemicals, or contaminated ground soil.
- Any material of which you are in doubt about the chemical contents.
- Invasive plants (like mint, dog strangling vine, or bindweed).

Basic composting is simple: combine chopped greens and browns with a shovel full of garden soil and aerate from time to time.

Be cautious with items deemed “biodegradable.” Many items are biodegradable but some take years to decompose. Plant material biodegrades quickly. Woody material does not. Some tea bags, coffee filters, and egg shells will hang around for a while and look unsightly in the garden.

TOOLS & CONVENIENCES

- Compost aerator to stir the pile (recommend 3-ft. green steel bar with folding wings and “T” handle). My first 3 aerators were too short to reach bottom, and quickly broke or rusted.

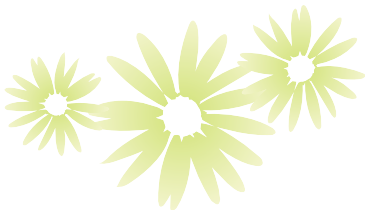


Aerator

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Far left:
Garden wasp nest

Left:
Waspinator

- Kitchen collector pail
 - stainless steel kitchen pail with lid (recommended – no smell, no filters to buy, easy to clean, and does not stain!)
 - porcelain container + ventilated lid + charcoal filter
 - plastic container + ventilated lid + charcoal filter
- Spatula (to scrape kitchen collector pail).
- Compost knife (chop material into easily biodegradable chunks).
- Compost shovel to access compost (size must suit the composter).
- Rake to sort unfinished material in the compost.
- Garden trug, wheelbarrow, or pail to transport the finished compost.

Aerating mixes or stirs the ingredients to redistribute the air, moisture, bacteria, fungus, and insects. It also discourages wasps from nesting inside the composter, and reduces (somewhat) the cloud of flies. I aerate the piles whenever they need water and air. No aeration composting can take up to 2 yrs.

Note: Kitchen-fed composting differs from community garden composting. The production of useable compost is affected by the pile composition and the mixture of ingredients: woody stalks (as in chopped sunflower stalks, brassicas stocks, and tomato/squash vines), greens, browns, and garden soil. Loads of one type of material (e.g. sod, leaves, vines) will take a long time but kitchen fruit and vegetable cuttings with egg cartons,

clean cardboard, and garden soil/old compost will be ready in a shorter time.

COMPOST PROBLEMS

- Too wet = slimy anaerobic decomposition, very smelly – add dry browns and aerate
- Too dry = low moisture discourages beneficial agents – add water and/or wet greens
- Too little air due to compaction stalls decomposition – aerate
- Wasps attracted to fruit sugars – aerate, cover fruit cuttings with soil, or use a waspinator
- Fly swarms – aerate and cover new additions with garden soil.
- Raccoons – lock, bungee cord, or tie down lids.

Notes:

“Beneficial agents” are microbes, bacteria, fungus, and insects (e.g. earwigs, centipedes, sow bugs)

“Waspinator” – wasps are territorial; an artificial wasp nest will discourage interlopers. Purchase one, or fill a brown paper bag with newspaper, shape it like a nest with the bunched end down and hang it near the composters. Check the paper bag after a rain.

NOTES

- Locating your composter: place it where you have easy access for loading and unloading. If possible, shelter it from sun and wind, and beware of tree roots – tree roots will feast on your rich compost.

- Insects (e.g. earwigs) help decomposition but locate composter away from the vegetables as earwigs will travel to your garden and eat entire rows of young vegetables like beans and Asian greens.
- If you have more than one composter, fill them one at a time and compost all year.
- Moist wood swells/rots. If you are going to build your own, Eastern white cedar or Hemlock last longest (15-20 yrs.).
- Treated wood leaches arsenic or copper sulfate (decks, sheds, wood fences, etc.)
- Avoid using carpet as a compost cover or weed suppressor (chemicals leech out).
- Compost tea – put compost and water in a bucket for a few days, strain the tea, dilute it (10 water:1 tea) and use it to fertilize containers.

To use your compost, you can scoop out small amounts from the bottom escape hatch and add compost to containers. If you want to use it all, remember that not all materials decompose at the same rate. You will have to rake out the unfinished material and put it back into the composter.

Tip: lift the entire composter off the pile and rake it all to one side (on a tarp if necessary). Replace the composter, rake out the unfinished bits, and replace them in the composter at the bottom. Then distribute the finished compost.

Some people add an extra step and screen the compost so the material is more refined. However, a good firm soil rake (not a springy leaf rake) may be quite satisfactory.

Bonus – plants can grow from the composter – tomatoes, potatoes, squash, melons – to decorate your pile, enlarge your harvest, and provide a compost water meter (the leaves of these plants will droop if there is insufficient moisture). When this happens, add water or rinse your kitchen pail with rain-barrel water and add the rinse to the composter.

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Local food and drink, games, auction, speakers, music, prizes, and a showcase of local green initiatives.
Special guest Olivia Chow

GOOD GREEN FUN!

Down to Earth, COG OSO's Quarterly E-Newsletter

Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa St. Lawrence Outaouais Chapter

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Assistant Editor: Allison Gibson

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Contributors: Rob Danforth, Ray Pearmain, Barbara Koch, Gary Weinhold, David Townson, Kayla Kazda, Michael Matthews, Jim Davidson, Adèle McKay, Lloyd Strachan, Kayoki Whiteduck, and Jen Coorsh

Mailing Editor: Megan McLeod

Mailing List Coordinator: Dick Coote

Deadline for next Down to Earth: **November 15, 2017**. Submit articles to the editor: editordowntoearth@gmail.com

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