

Monthly Newsletter

BETTER LIVING BASICS

Let's Talk Composting

When you hear the word “compost” do you feel intimidated? I know I did until I learned more about it! Now, it is super easy and is a great way to do something with your food scraps other than throw them away.

Did you know Americans throw away enough food each day to fill up the Rose Bowl? That fact is astonishing to me! Therefore, composting is a great way to return food back to the soil instead of it rotting in our landfills. The next few pages are tips to get your compost started!

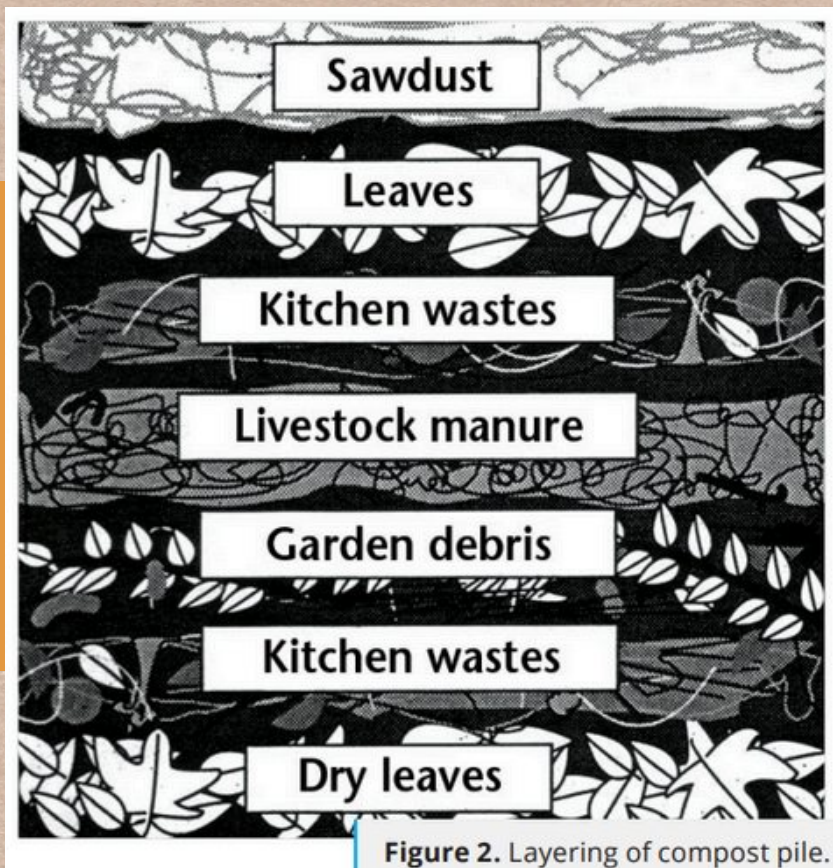


Figure 2. Layering of compost pile.

EASY GARDENING: COMPOSTING

Joseph Masabni¹ and Patrick Lillard²

If we composted many of the things we throw away, such as kitchen scraps, grass clippings, leaves, and other landscape debris, we could divert 20 to 30 percent of the trash currently going into landfills. By composting these materials, we can reduce the amount of waste we generate and produce organic matter and nutrients for our garden, landscape and yard.

Composting is simply the process of organic material decomposition. The resulting substance is called compost. Every garden benefits from the addition of compost because it supplies many of the nutrients plants need and also

- ▶ Improves the soil's physical characteristics
- ▶ Increases the soil capacity to hold water and nutrients
- ▶ Increases soil aeration

MATERIALS FOR COMPOSTING

Many materials can be put in compost piles, including:

- ▶ **Kitchen scraps.** Fruit and vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds and filters, and eggshells are great items for the compost pile. Do not use animal products such as grease, fat or meat trimmings, or dairy products because they break down very slowly, attract rodents and other pests, and have an unpleasant odor when they decompose.
- ▶ **Grass clippings.** Grass clippings (Fig. 1a) have relatively high nitrogen content and make good compost. Mix green, fresh clippings with soil or dry plant material such as leaves to keep the grass from compacting as it settles. Compaction prevents air from entering the pile and slows or prevents the composting process.
- ▶ **Dry leaves.** These are plentiful in the fall, and rather than putting them out by the curb, put them in your compost pile. Most leaves decompose faster and more thoroughly when shredded before they are added to the pile. If you do not have a shredder,

place the leaves in a row on your yard and cut them up with a rotary lawn mower. Rake up the chopped leaves and add them to the compost pile. (Figs. 1a and 1b.)

- ▶ **Manure.** Chicken, cow and horse manures are great nitrogen sources for compost piles. Cat and dog feces should never be put in a compost pile because they can carry disease organisms.
- ▶ **Sawdust.** Sawdust is plentiful at sawmills in many areas, especially in East Texas. Always compost sawdust before adding it to your garden because it can tie up nitrogen in the soil as it decomposes. Add extra nitrogen to sawdust to speed its breakdown.
- ▶ **Other materials.** Sod removed from the lawn, hay, non-noxious weeds, shredded newspaper, and hedge clippings can all be composted. Large twigs break down slowly so do not use them.



Figure 1. Grass clippings and leaves (1a) make good compost. Leaves compost faster if they are shredded before being added to the pile (1b).

¹Assistant Professor and Extension Horticulturist

²Extension Assistant
The Texas A&M University System

COMPOSTING CONTINUED

You can buy many types of composting bins, but you can also make one easily with wire fencing, cement blocks, bricks, or even scrap lumber. Less room is required if the pile is enclosed, but if you have adequate room you can also leave it free standing. With an enclosed pile, leave an opening on one side so the compost can be turned with a fork to allow air to enter the pile. The compost pile should be located:

- ▶ In a secluded area
- ▶ Preferably near the garden
- ▶ In a partially shaded area to prevent the pile from drying out too fast
- ▶ In a spot with good drainage so it does not become waterlogged



Ideally, a compost pile should be made up in layers. The first layer should be coarse plant material, such as branches and twigs, to allow oxygen to circulate up through the pile. The second layer should be 6 to 10 inches of finer plant material such as leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps. The third layer should be a 1 inch layer of soil or manure, which provides microorganisms and nitrogen. The microorganisms are what actually break down the plant material. To do this they need food in the form of nitrogen. If you use soil for this layer, add 1/3 cup nitrogen for every 25 square feet of compost pile surface area. The nitrogen

IN-GROUND COMPOSTING

Composting can also be done directly in the ground, preferably where a garden row is to be planted the following season once the raw material has completely composted. To do in-ground composting:

1. Dig up the area—a long row or a raised bed—and remove the soil.
2. Fill the hole with the organic materials, such as shredded newspapers and dry leaves.
3. Cover it up with the original soil.
4. Let this area rest, or compost, for a few months.
5. Turn the soil and use it as a new planting bed.



MUST-TRY RECIPE

Apple Pie in a Glass

Ingredients (2 servings)

- 1 1/2 cups skim milk
- 3 tablespoon 100% frozen apple juice concentrate
- 1/2 cup fat free or low-fat vanilla frozen yogurt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Utensils

- Measuring cups & spoons
- Stirring spoon
- Blender or 1 quart jar with lid

Directions

1. Put all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. If blender is unavailable, mix all ingredients in a large quart (4 cup) jar that has a tight lid. Screw on the lid tightly and shake until everything is mixed well.
2. Stir before serving.

Nutrition Facts	
2 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (264g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	200
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 25mg	8%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 35g	13%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 30g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 291mg	20%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 1mg	0%
*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	



Fall makes me think of pumpkin spice, pecans, and apples. Typically, these are healthy foods, until we bake them into sugary pies or drinks. This recipe is a great way to satisfy the apple pie craving, but knowing it is a tad bit healthier! Another plus is it cost effective with it only being \$0.43 per serving.

Monthly Newsletter

BETTER LIVING BASICS

Upcoming Programs



Get A Taste For Reducing Food Waste

Learn How To:

Reduce food waste in your home

The What and Why About Home Food Waste

Learn about the impact of food waste, why it happens, and how to limit it!

Let's Get Real About Meal Planning

Find out steps for planning meals with what you have and turning leftovers into a second meal.

Does Food Really Expire?

Understanding the Dates on Food Labels

Learn how to use the dates on food labels to buy, store, and eat safe and fresh food!

Composting Food Waste at Home

Find out which foods can be composted and different methods for maintaining your compost.

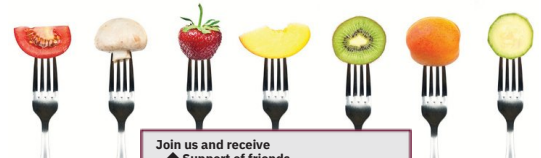
Session Start:

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity provider.

I am very excited about doing one of our new programs, "Get a Taste for Reducing Food Waste" with Foster Grandparents! This program discusses meal planning, composting, and how to understand expiration dates.

A FRESH START to a Healthier You!



Join us and receive

- ◆ Support of friends
- ◆ Confidence to cook healthy meals for your children and family
- ◆ Practical cooking and shopping tips
- ◆ Handy kitchen tools
- ◆ Recipes for success in the kitchen



This month through December, I will be hosting a program at Copper Rawlings Senior Center, Maggie Trejo Senior Center, Lubbock Adult Activity Center, and Mae Simmons Senior Center. Feel free to join!!

Upcoming Programs Continued

Choose Healthy is a four session series provided by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service - Better Living for Texans.

This curriculum was created to teach middle-school aged kids about nutrition.



About Better Living For Texans Vision

Creating opportunities, changing lives

Mission

We provide research and evidence-based nutrition, health and wellness knowledge to empower individuals, families, and communities to make positive changes for healthier lives

Why implement Choose Healthy?

The information is priceless! Helping young teens develop good nutrition habits can have positive long-term effects on their health.

Teens often fail to meet dietary recommendations which can result in nutrient deficiencies leading to problems such as impaired cognitive and physical performance. Choose Healthy gives them the knowledge they need to prevent this.

Students will have a good time! The curriculum is designed to be interactive and engaging, ensuring that students are never bored!



How does Choose Healthy work?

It is easy! Our educators will plan and prepare each session. All they need are kids to teach and a place to teach them.

Choose Healthy series has four sessions plus an optional bonus session. Each session lasts between 45-60 minutes.

While the general topic remains the same, the specific focuses of sessions are customizable to the needs and interests of the students.

Each student will receive a Choose Healthy booklet which includes helpful resources and tasty recipes.

CULTIVATE, COOK, AND CREATE

COME LEARN, GROW, EAT, GO WITH US

Thurs. Oct. 3-24 10:00am-11:30am @GRUB FARM

Event Highlights
Limited space - Register below

To register fill out form-click or scan below

About Our Event
The 4-week EC LGE school garden curriculum project combines the best of plant and garden learning, food exposure, brain- and body-boosting physical activities.

JOIN NOW!

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

The first Thursday of each month the program "Choose Healthy will be put on for youth at the YWCA!

Learn, Grow, Eat and Go will be on each Thursday in October at the SPFD GRUB Farm!

832 MILES
8 weeks
TEAMS OF 8

LET'S GET MOVING LUBBOCK!!

2024 WALK ACROSS TEXAS! BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

kicks off September 23rd!

Walk Across Texas! is an eight-week program designed to help Texans establish the habit of regular physical activity. Each team may include up to 8 team members, all working together logging miles to reach the 832-mile goal to make their way across the state of Texas. Ready to take the challenge? Grab your friends, family, co-workers and get your team registered!

Sign up today! Go to howdyhealth.org.
Adult teams - Enter league code: **watL-240920-06497**
Youth or Mixed teams - Enter league code: **watLY-240918-64131**

For more information, call the Lubbock County Extension Office (806)775-1740

Let's get moving this fall! Join our Walk Across Texas! program. Contact our office for more information at (806) 775-1740.

CURRENT NEWS

Nutrition

MyPlate is a visual tool created by the USDA to help Americans make healthy choices when it comes to food and drink. MyPlate was launched in 2011 and features the five major food groups in a user-friendly, plate-and-cup arrangement that you can look at and easily see the relative amount of each food group to include in each meal. Making healthy food choices while you're young will help you grow and develop properly - MyPlate makes it easy to make healthy choices.



Physical Activity

A lot of teens don't get as much movement as they need for optimal health. Our society today has made it easier and easier to be sedentary. Instead of doing our own grocery shopping, we can order our food online and have it delivered to us. Many of us choose to text our friends instead of walking or riding a bike to their house. When we cut out opportunities to be active, it can affect how many calories we need to eat. Simply put, when our activity level decreases so do our calorie needs.

Gardening

Not all crops are well suited to every region. Identify plants that will work in your neck of the woods by looking up your plant zone—a geographic area based on average winter temperatures. Ashley Nussman-Berry notes that a common mistake for new gardeners is to plant the wrong crops: "I cannot grow citrus plants in zone seven, though I would really love to," she says. "You have to grow what will survive in your area or you are just setting up your garden for failure."

Type your zip code into the USDA's Plant Hardiness Zone Map to figure out your growing season and zone. This map divides North America into 11 planting zones. Take this information with you when buying seeds or seedlings (the packaging should clue you into which crops to grow).



WHAT IS BLT?

Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a nutrition education program for adults and children that are SNAP participants and SNAP eligible. The BLT program helps people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, save money at the grocery store, grow their own foods, and adopt better food safety habits.

We provide research and evidence-based nutrition, health and wellness knowledge to empower individuals, families, and communities to make positive changes for healthier lives

Statistics show that 1 out of every 6 Texans struggle with food insecurity and hunger and eat less than the daily recommended allowance of fruits and vegetables. In addition, Texas children and adults are less physically active than recommended.



Brooke Walser
Extension Agent - Better Living for Texans
Lubbock County
Email: brooke.walser@ag.tamu.edu
Office: (806) 775-1740

Contact me if you have any questions or would like to talk about setting up a program!