



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
PRESS RELEASE
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Free Compost Course at Princeton Community Garden

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) invites everyone to the Princeton Community Garden on Wednesday August 18th, 2010 at 5:30 pm for a free composting course. The Princeton Community Garden is located at 499 Corina Ave in Princeton at the John Allison Elementary School. The 45 minute course will help anyone that wants to learn a few hints about making wonderful food for their garden and reducing the waste they send to the landfill.

Cameron Baughen, RDOS Solid Waste Management Coordinator, will be hosting the free course. He's noticed three common issues that can be fixed to make composting fun and easy.

The first is making sure you have a good mix of materials. In composting you want to mix 1 part 'Green' material such as food waste or green grass with 1 part 'Brown' material like dry leaves, dry grass, torn newspaper or yard waste.

"People are great at adding food waste or green grass to a compost bin but forget to add dry leaves, dry grass or yard waste," explains Baughen. "You need that mix of 1 part food waste to 1 part dry leaves to properly compost. When you put in a bucket of compost make sure you put in a bucket of dry leaves or other 'Brown' material to get an optimal mix for composting."

The second tip is to not add soil to your compost. Adding soil to compost is a mistaken myth. Soil stops the composting process by plugging all the air holes in the compost pile.

"At the landfill we cover up garbage with soil to stop it from breaking down. We often unearth 50 year old newspapers at the Landfill that you can still read! Soil is great at stopping composting, not helping it."

Baughen believes people add soil to their compost bin to stop odors and flies. But he thinks there are better ways to deal with these issues.

"When you add food waste make sure you cover it. Use finished compost, yard waste, dry leaves or dry grass. Burying food waste with 'Browns' (not soil) will block odors and flies and allow for proper composting."

The last tip is to add water to your compost bin. In our dry Interior climate, water can easily be leached out of compost. Without water the composting process stops.

"Composting microbes use water to travel, reproduce and even live. Without water the bugs can't get in there and break down the material."

Before adding water, poke your pile with a long stick or turn it first. This will help aerate and mix your pile, helping to speed up the process. It will also help water reach the whole pile.

"You can fill up your compost bucket with water every time you go outside or you can put a hose into your pile for a few minutes. It is hard to overwater compost, especially in the summer, and you will see how much faster you get material."

The free talk, at 5:30 pm on Wednesday August 18th, 2010 at the Princeton Community Garden at John Allison Elementary School, will cover the basics of composting, using compost in your garden, grasscycling, worm composting and building backyard 'dog doo' digesters.

For a limited time, sturdy plastic compost bins are available for purchase through the Town of Princeton and Village of Keremeos. These easy to use compost bins come with an instruction manual. Used as directed, compost bins will help turn kitchen scraps and yard waste into excellent food for your garden and house plants. For information on this limited time sale or tips on composting please contact the RDOS Solid Waste Department.

If you have any questions, please contact the RDOS Solid Waste Department toll free at 1-877-610-3737 ext. 4129 or e-mail info@rdos.bc.ca. Residents can also contact the Town of Princeton or Village of Keremeos regarding their compost bin sale. Information on composting or the compost bin sale is available at www.rdos.bc.ca.

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