

Fall Newsletter



COMPOST CLUB UPDATES

Compost Club is excited to say that we have had the pleasure of participating in many events recently outside of our regular day to day service. We had a blast at "Wedtoberfest," which was a wedding expo for beer enthusiasts. We were also ecstatic to compost at the Family Reception during orientation at the University of Chicago.

A Compost Club update that may not sound too exciting at first, but we are overjoyed with, is our new dumpster from Republic Services. This bad boy has a retractable cover and is completely leak proof. If this is interesting to you, you're in luck! Check out the journey your compost takes in a section below.

WELCOME TO COMPOST CLUB

We would like to welcome all our new and returning members to Urban Canopy's Compost Club for the new season! We are so excited to continue to welcome new numbers, expand our service area, and build our community. Don't forget to refer a friend!

Don't miss out on our friends over in the Urban Canopy LUCSA branch. LUCSA, or Local Unified Community Sourced Agriculture, provides a beautiful box of food delivered to your home, and a rotating list of weekly additions from local farmers and producers. Sign ups for the winter season are open until 10/10/22, so act quickly to secure your seasonal share!

[Find more about the share & sign up today by following this link!](#)

Composting Shout Out: The Jade Vine

We are happy to give a shout out to one of our commercial members who has been composting with us for nearly a year now. The Jade Vine, up on 3806 W Montrose Ave, is an absolutely wonderful flower shop of which we can't speak more highly.

The owner, Hannah, describes the shop as, "an eclectic urban flower shop with an earth-conscious approach to floral design. Most of our flowers are sustainably sourced directly from a family owned and operated farm in Ecuador, additional flowers sourced from local, Illinois growers. All floral and food waste is composted, delivery routes are optimized for less emissions, staff members bike to work when possible, packing materials are all 100% recycled, and more efforts to become waste-free!" It is great to partner with like minded businesses around the city of Chicago.

The Jade Vine provides a number of awesome floral related services, while also providing a space for other art vendors like: Winging Abstract, Ten|4 Candle Co., and Creating Cary to name a few. They've had an exciting month including hosting their first ever candle-making workshop, weddings galore, several markets, and cute parties in their little shop.

Fall is upon us and its just in time for a beautiful Pumpkin bouquet. There have been plenty of pre-orders already. Check it out on their website here. The Jade Vine also provides a monthly subscription to provide fresh and lovely bouquets delivered to your home or someone else's home each month.

The Jade Vine also provides services for private events that you can book through www.peerspace.com. They are listed as Eclectic Urban Flower Shop on Peerspace. As it seems like every season nowadays is wedding season, schedule a free consultation today for the 2023 weddings as spots are filling up fast. Most of their work is custom and made-to-order, so please don't hesitate to reach out to thejadevinechicago@gmail.com with any specific needs. For more information or examples of our work, please check us out on Instagram "@jadevinechicago."

Speaking of checking out their Instagram, one of their partners will be helping with a Candle and Wreath workshop this October 9th, for a four-hour hybrid Candle + Wreath Workshop! Attendees will receive hands-on instruction from two industry professionals on how to make a soy-wax candle, as well as a custom seasonal wreath. Ten|4 Candle Co will lead on how to make an 8oz candle in a pre-made, hand-poured, concrete vessel. You will be using coconut soy-wax while Hannah with The Jade Vine will provide a wreath structure made of grapevine, wire, or metal hoop, and attendees will be able to choose from a large selection of assorted floral, while receiving instruction regarding color palette, assembly and care. Not to mention there will be charcuterie and beverages! Email thejadevinechicago@gmail.com to learn more about this \$120 per person workshop. There are only ten spots so act fast!



*Image of terracotta pumpkin vase with yellow, red, green, white and purple flowers

Winter Garden Prep with Finished Compost!

Although the growing season is winding down, there's still plenty of work to be done on your soil to prepare for next year. Here's some info to help prepare your garden for the winter:

Amending your soil is one of the best ways to keep your garden beds or growing pots thriving across the quieter winter months. The easiest method for this is to either apply a layer of compost on top of your soil, or to mix compost directly into your soil.



Adding compost as an amendment will help your soil retain moisture over the drier winter months, as well as to keep your soil temperature more steady throughout the winter. This will allow the nutrients in your soil to continue to thrive until you're ready to plant again come spring!

Before amending your soil, don't forget to clean up any remaining crops, do a final weeding, save flowers or herbs that can be hung up to dry; and seeds that can be replanted next year.

Although some of you have likely received compost already as part of our rewards program, feel free to contact us year-round to purchase additional compost to be delivered with any regular bucket swap!

Email compost@theurbancanopy.org for more info.

What Actually Happens to your Food Scraps?!

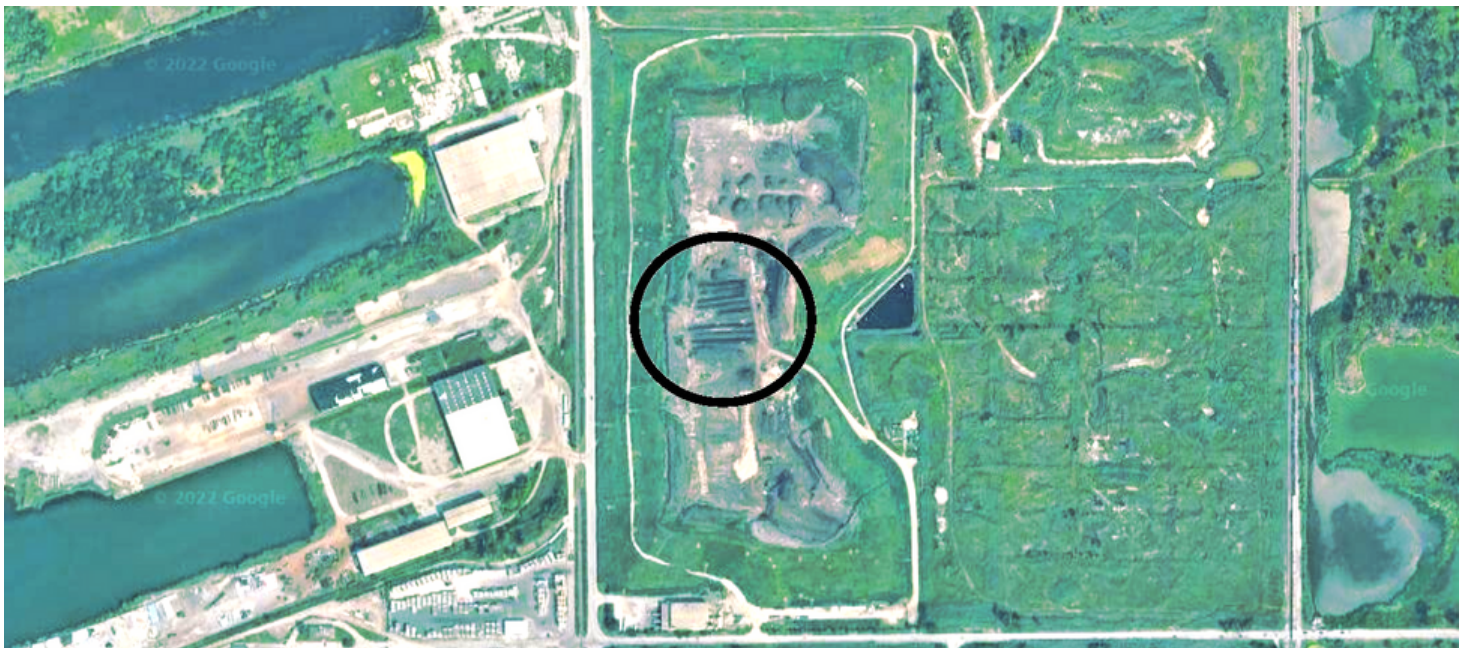
We often get asked about where the compost we pick up ends up, and how it's processed. After leaving your home, and stopping at our warehouse headquarters in Pilsen in our cool 20 yard covered dumpster, all of the food scraps are transported to be processed into compost at a facility called Harbor View on the south side of Chicago in the Deering neighborhood.

The food scraps are composted using the windrow composting method, which is one of the best methods for large quantities of compostable material, as it is a form of "hot composting," which effectively and quickly breaks down a wide variety of materials, including BPI Certified Compostable items, like the bags that we line our buckets and totes with.

The piles are checked for contamination and managed extensively, and when they are done breaking down, the finished compost is tested for levels of nutrients and any contamination like heavy metals. After this point, it is certified by the US Composting Council, marking it as a highly nutritious, totally organic finished compost!

We are very proud of the fact that our entire process is taking place within the immediate Chicago area - all of our scraps are picked up in Chicago and the near suburbs, everything is processed within the city limits, and we are one of only a few distributors of entirely locally produced finished compost in the city.

[Check out this quick video for a mini-tour of the facility!](#)



A satellite image of the facility and surrounding area, which includes rehabilitated parkland such as Big Marsh Park and Indian Ridge Marsh Park, as well as still in-use industrial shipping slips on Lake Calumet. The composting facility is bordered by 122nd Street and Stony Island Ave, and the large windrows of compost are circled in black here.

Pickle Recipe

Is your garden overgrown? Do you have too many extra cucumbers or green beans sitting around? PICKLE THEM! Pickling is fairly simple once you get the hang of it.

We prefer using a 1:1 ratio of salt to sugar and a 1:1 ratio of water to distilled vinegar. So if we are using a 12 oz mason jar, we would heat up 3/4 cup of water with 3/4 cup of vinegar and add 1 Tbsp of Kosher salt and 1 Tbsp of white sugar. Your pickling brine only needs to get heated up enough so the salt and sugar dissolve. We love adding Spice House's pickling blend at this stage.

The brine is then ready to be poured over your cucumbers in the mason jar. At this stage you can either properly can the pickles by boiling the jars safely, or you can let the brine cool and just put it in the fridge if you are going to eat these pickles in the next couple of weeks.

Feel free to add some fresh herbs like dill or some garlic with those cucumbers and to adjust these ratios as you see fit. Add more vinegar if you like a little more of a sour pickle. Or check out making a half sour pickle if you like a lot of crunch.

You can really experiment quite a bit with different ingredients and veggies. A few red pepper flakes go a long way, or even some whole chilies can be excellent for some heat. A dash of soy sauce, a bit of sesame oil, some fresh ginger, or even a smidge of curry powder can really elevate your pickling game. Don't limit yourself to cucumbers too. Try carrots, asparagus, green beans, or cauliflower, to name a few. A well-kept Chicago secret are sport peppers - they are simply pickled serrano peppers! Give it a try, the sky's the limit.

Do you enjoy the flavor of pickles, but don't want to make them yourselves? Well, check out the LUCSA add on pages, and our processing branch.

Have you heard the word: Referral?

One of the best ways for us to spread the good word about composting is through you, our members! This is why we want to highlight our ongoing "referral program." Tell your family, friends, and neighbors about our residential composting program. If someone signs up and puts your name, as a current member, you and the person signing up will receive one of our rewards of your choosing. This is our way of saying, "thank you," for not only being a member but going above and beyond to keep food scraps out of landfills by spreading the word about at home compost service.

To be honest, we can advertise until we are red in the face, but it really takes folks talking to one another and explaining the good word about composting. Our best marketing ends up being done by folks like you! We use the phrase "compost champions" to refer to our members who take the time to explain and show how our service works to their family, friends, and neighbors.



*image of silver fork piercing a green pickle

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