

Spring Newsletter '22



The Compost Club Updates

We have a lot of exciting news to share! Many folks are already aware, but Healthy Soil Compost and The Urban Canopy merged this past autumn. The Urban Canopy is continuing to provide the compost hauling services, while maintaining Healthy Soil as the brand of finished compost.

We are happy to announce that we are providing finished compost again as a reward to our members! Please let us know via email if you would like to change your reward type or have any questions about our rewards program. You can also purchase finished compost by emailing us! There will be more specific information later on in the newsletter.

Finally, in 2022 the Urban Canopy collected Christmas trees for composting for the first time! We kept over 200 trees out of landfills this year, and we hope to double our efforts next year.



Welcome to The 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 excited to continue growing our numbers, expanding our service area, and building our community.



Partnering with The Dill Pickle!

We would like to announce our new partnership with The Dill Pickle. They were just named the best local grocery by "Best of Chicago" for the third year in a row! You can check out their website [here](#), but do yourself a favor if you are in the Logan Square area and check out the Dill Pickle for yourself at the corner of Milwaukee and Spaulding. The Dill Pickle is a democratically governed grocery store owned by over 4,000 folks. Anyone can become an owner by either buying full shares outright or paying a flexible monthly fee; moreover, anyone can shop there regardless of if they're a member! Grab a cool beverage and tasty snack to enjoy by the square. We are happy to provide them with finished compost for in store retail and a promotional deal for our compost hauling service for their members. We hope to offer composting seminars with the Dill Pickle this spring, so stay tuned for new and exciting partnership opportunities!



Composting Tips and Tricks

While composting is one of the best ways to give leftover food scraps a second life as nutrient rich soil, there are also a lot of options for getting another use out of food scraps before you even drop them in your bucket to be taken to the compost pile.

One of the most popular ways to use leftover bits and pieces is to make a stock - save vegetable skins and peels, bones, and other scraps, cover them in water, and cook them slowly to create a base for soups and stews.

Certain other commonly discarded items can be creatively incorporated into new dishes - kale stems, carrot tops and lemon zest are all examples of items regularly tossed into the bucket when they are completely edible, or great additions to many recipes. The ends of a loaf of bread that might be getting a little stale are perfect for turning into salad croutons or breadcrumbs with a little oil and seasoning. These are just a few examples of getting creative with your scraps. Other foods can easily be regrown - just toss the bottoms of green onions into a jar with some water, and watch them grow again for another use. The same can be done with small amounts of other herbs, like lemongrass, or mint.

Healthy Soil For Sale, or

Reward



Now that The Urban Canopy and Healthy Soil have combined forces, "Healthy Soil Compost" is our brand of finished compost for retail purchase, or as a reward after every tenth pickup to Compost Club Members. Healthy Soil Compost comes from food scraps and plant-based waste from our Compost Club contributors in neighborhood homes, restaurants, schools, and offices. We keep it all from going into landfills and turn it into premium compost for Chicago growers. We are able to offer 1/2 gallon jars (via retail stores: Dill Pickle and [Fleur Chicago](#) or as a [LUCSA](#) add on) or 5 gallon buckets (which is the size of the reward) of Healthy Soil. We are also capable of completing large orders upon request of 1-30 cubic yards of soil, so if you have a big garden that needs Healthy Soil, let us know! Please note that Healthy Soil is not the same as potting soil and should be thought of as a nutritional boost for your soil, like a multivitamin. For your garden we would suggest using it as a top dressing, and apply 1" to 2" to the top of existing soil every 6 months or at the beginning and end of each growing season. Healthy Soil is for potted plants too. Add to your favorite potting mix at a ratio of 30% compost to 70% of your favorite potting soil blend. You can also incorporate 1, 5 gallon bucket of Healthy Soil Compost into 2 cubic foot bags of any potting soil. Healthy Soil is not ideal for direct seeding unless it is evenly incorporated into a seed starting mix. To order finished compost please email us at compost@theurbancanopy.org.

FAQs

Here are some of our most frequently asked questions:

Q: Can I leave a pizza box or extra bag of compost with my bucket?

A: Yes, but we ask that you email us by 3:00pm the day prior to pick up, or we cannot ensure that the extra materials will be grabbed by our driver. Please note that any extra materials will incur a small fee.. We always suggest to try and fold your pizza boxes up and see if you can fit it inside your bucket. Pack in your compostable material as tight as you can!

Q: Can I compost mussel and clam shells?

A: Absolutely! We like to say, " If it grows it goes."

Q: Can I compost my dog's poop?

A: No, please do not compost any feces, animal or human. There are local regulations that don't allow us to take this material.

Q: Can I change my pick-up day?

A: Unfortunately not - our pick up days are determined by your physical location. This is to make our routes as dense as possible, to lessen our overall environmental footprint. by decreasing the miles we have to drive.

Compostable vs Biodegradable Items

Although there's been a boom in recent years of compostable products, there's also a lot of misinformation and mislabeling that we have noticed. There are only a few sure-fire certifications that will mark a product as compostable, the best of which is the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) Certification. These will always be clearly labeled on an item and/or its packaging when it can be safely put into your compost bucket.



The most common confusion that occurs around whether an item can go into a compost bucket or not is if it is labeled: biodegradable. Although the terms "biodegradable" and "compostable" are related, it's important to know the difference when composting.

Items that are biodegradable will break down eventually; in order to be labeled "biodegradable," that is the only criteria. For this reason, some items labeled "biodegradable" may still take years, or even decades to break down fully, and could leave behind toxins as well.

In order to be labeled "compostable," an item needs to break down entirely and safely into nutrient rich finished compost, within 6 months, in the proper facility. All of our material is composted in a facility that adheres to these standards, and all of our compost is tested regularly to make sure that it is meeting high standards of quality and safety. The best way to help maintain this is to make sure that all of the items going into your bucket are 100% compostable!

[CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE](#)

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2550 S Leavitt St Chicago, IL 60608

Check out our [new Facebook group](#) and join the conversation. This is a space for fellow compost club members to chat and swap stories about their composting adventure.



Check out our new unified service zone here on our [website](#). We want to keep expanding to our west and south and provide affordable at home compost hauling service for all Chicagoans!