

# Summer Newsletter



## COMPOST CLUB UPDATES

Summer is here and we couldn't be more excited to share all that Urban Canopy's Compost Club have been up to!

We would like to announce that we are currently offering a Referral Program! If your friend, neighbor, grandma, or whoever signs up for our service, tell them to put your name at the bottom of their sign-up form and you will both receive a reward of your choosing!

Urban Canopy's Compost Club has also partnered with The University of Chicago to provide a pilot program wherein we offer compost collection in one of the dormitories. We are hoping to expand this program in the Fall!



## 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 grow our numbers, expand our service area, and build our community.

Now that we're in the full swing of summer produce season, we thought it would be a great time to shout out one of the other branches of The Urban Canopy – our Farmers Market team! Catch them at markets from Rogers Park to Beverly and neighborhoods in between. They'll be selling the produce grown on our own south side farm, items made in our processing kitchen, as well as organic produce from farms that we've partnered with. Here is a calendar of all the markets we're a part of this season:

[MARKET CALENDAR](#)

## New Composting Partners!

We are proud to give a shout out to some of our newer partners! We recently partnered with [Kavnia Coffee](#). Their coffee is extraordinary and for good reason, "...Instead of your average cold brew, left to soak and over extract overnight, we engineered a coffee brewed with gravity. Enter cold drip- more flavorful with a smooth finish, highlighting what makes specialty beans...special." No wonder our crew can't get enough of this their delicious cold brew! These coffee beans do a lot of travelling! We had the pleasure of hearing the whole story from Bella Black and it is just so fascinating I had to share it with you:

"Based in Chicago, but powered by women around the world," Their light roast beans, "hail from the Sakami Estate, owned by Gloria Gummerus (member of the International Women's Coffee Alliance) and her husband Jarmo. From seed to mill, the producers have found ways to incorporate sustainable farming practices into everything they do." Not to mention their medium roasted beans. These come from the "...mountainous forest [which] is part of the larger Leuser ecosystem which is also home to Sumatran tigers, elephants, and orangutans. Our beans are grown, cared for, harvested, semi-washed and processed by Ketiara Cooperative in the Gayo Highlands in the districts of Bener Meriah and Central Aceh, Sumatra, Indonesia. This cooperative is led by Rahmah, a coffee visionary and her team. The beans are then curated and roasted by the team at Colectivo Coffee Roasters in the Riverwest neighborhood of Milwaukee, WI, USA...A big part of our mission is to help secure a future full of great coffee, so we care about the impact of our company from top to bottom. We source our beans from women owned coffee farms and co-ops to further support gender equity in those communities. How we sell our coffee is part of our sustainability story too. All those single-use cups from the daily coffee run add up! Last year our customers saved 6,000 cups from heading to the landfill."

It is so amazing to hear this story and to be partnered with some sustainably conscious folks. I swear, this coffee is on another level!

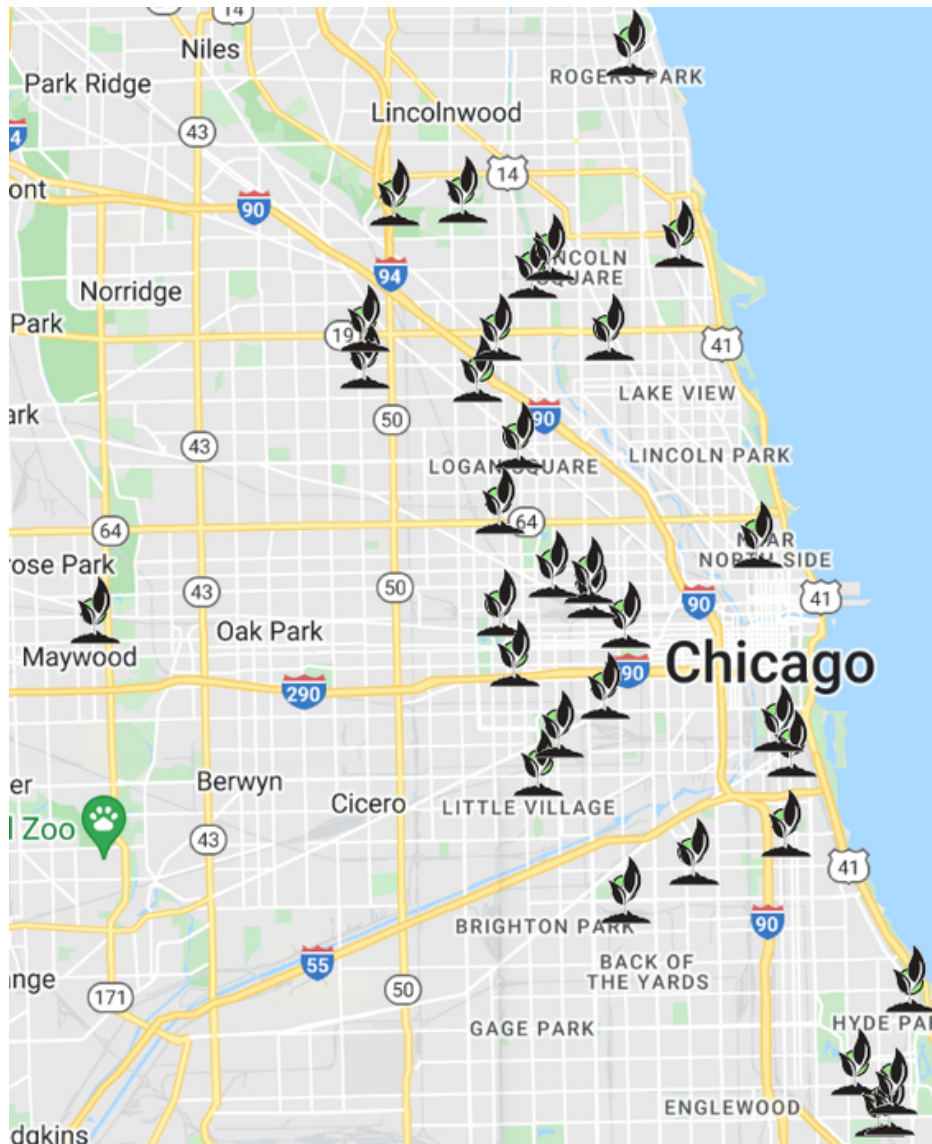


Many of our crew have enjoyed being a long time customers of the [Spice House](#), so we am also pleased to announce our partnership with them. "The Spice House has been a purveyor of the finest spices, herbs, blends, and extracts since 1957, with customers ranging from renowned Michelin-star chefs to home cooks everywhere. We've spent over 65 years curating our global network of premium growers and distributors in order to offer our customers unrivaled quality and selection. Our products range from essential and rare spice varieties to proprietary rubs and blends, all of which can be purchased in our stores and on our website."

They have all your classic single spices and mixes among some other great blends! We've fallen in love with their "Black Garlic Ramen Pepper" they developed with Iron Chef Morimoto. You can put this pepper mix on just about everything: chicken, beef, pork, veggies, you name it, You'll be happy to but this black garlic pepper mix on it. Also, give their "Oaxacan Ancho Coffee Rub" a go with a generous dry rub on a pork shoulder for 24 hours before cooking it using your favorite low and slow method. Try this on Jackfruit if you're feeling adventure or an eggplant! You wont be sorry! Order online or check out their store front in person.

# Healthy Soil Compost

We are proud to be one of the only places in Chicago to offer finished compost that is made from local food scraps, processed here in the city, and distributed locally. Many of our members receive free compost as part of our rewards program, but we are also busy delivering compost to schools, community gardens, farms, and home gardeners all over the city. Here's a peek at where some of our compost is helping grow healthy plants this year:



We also love to hear from people using the compost, and to see pictures of what's being grown with Healthy Soil! We got this one great tip from a local gardener who has picked up finished compost from us multiple times over the past two seasons:

"I blended 5 gallons of Healthy Soil Compost with 2 cu ft. of peatmoss and made a great potting mix. Peatmoss is great stuff: a peat-free potting substrate made from recycled newspaper, with added fertilizers. Using Healthy Soil Compost and Peatmoss allows for a planting mix completely made from repurposed wastes. And it performs better than peat too. Thank you!" – Steve G

We also got the great pictures above from another local gardener on the south side who has ordered from us for the second year in a row and had this to say: "Last year our garden was so productive and I really think the compost had a lot to do with it. Our fruit was especially massive - I'm talking 20lb watermelons, lots of 12+ inch cucumbers, a huge amount of tomatoes, etc. It was awesome!" – Courtney T

If you want some compost for your garden, reach out to us at [compost@theurban canopy.org](mailto:compost@theurban canopy.org) for 1/2 off the retail price!

# Tips 'n' Tricks for Composting!

## Brown vs. Green Materials

At The Urban Canopy, we use an industrial method of composting known as windrow composting. This is a form of "hot" composting that allows us to break down a much wider variety of materials than an average backyard pile, which is why we can accept items such as meat, and BPI Certified Compostable products. We also love to support composting in all its forms, and to spread knowledge about what makes good compost whether in your backyard or in a windrow.

One of the most important distinctions to make when trying to maintain a healthy compost pile is between "brown" and "green" materials. Green materials are rich in nitrogen, and include items like food scraps, and fresh plant material. Brown materials are rich in carbon, and include items like paper scraps, dried leaves, and dry plant materials. Maintaining the proper ratio of nitrogen to carbon is essential to creating a nutrient dense compost, especially in a backyard pile.

The compost buckets we pick up from our members are primarily green materials, and the proper ratio of brown to green is achieved at the composting facility as it is added to the windrow, so there's no need to worry about getting this ratio exactly right in your own bucket!

## What Do We Mean by "Organic"

One of our favorite things to say when asked if something can go in the bucket is: "if it grows it goes!" What we mean by that is any organic material (anything that grows) is okay to throw in the bucket, including plant clippings, natural materials, and, of course, food waste. However we also want to be clear that when we say organic, we are referring to organic material, like the items mentioned above; as opposed to items that are "certified organic", which is a specific classification applied to produce, and some other items. While an organic certification is a helpful way to know that an item has been produced without pesticides, and in a more sustainable fashion than conventionally farmed items, there are a lot of agricultural items and other products that meet the same standards as certified organic items, but haven't been certified; or are otherwise a-okay to toss in your bucket!

## Bucket Maintenance Tips

While a regularly swapped compost bucket usually doesn't get too funky, there are some ways to manage your compost bucket to avoid unnecessary odors and an unpleasant home composting experience.

Although the lids we provide should seal tightly to prevent any odor from escaping the bucket, it is also important to allow oxygen into the bucket by opening the lid - sometimes called "burping" the bucket. This is because one of the main causes of bad smells from the bucket is that the environment inside of the bucket becomes anaerobic. This means an environment without oxygen. Allowing oxygen into the bucket will help keep the bucket from smelling, and aid in beginning a healthy breakdown of your food waste.

Another cause of odor in the bucket is an excess of liquid, and one way to manage this is to layer your food waste with "brown waste" as discussed above - paper products in particular will help to even out the environment inside the bucket. Certain types of paper waste, especially those that aren't recyclable, like ripped up pizza boxes or shredded paper, are ideal for this.

## Do We Offer Larger Composting Options? YES!

We get a lot of folks asking us if and how they can compost with their neighbors. Well, we have just the service for that! In addition to our "Residential Service" with the 5-gallon bucket, we offer a Commercial or Communal Compost hauling service with either a 7-gallon bucket (a little taller than the 5 gallon), a 35-gallon rolling tote (about half the size of a Chicago trash bin), or some combination of both. This aspect of our service is popular with restaurants, office buildings, and condo or apartment buildings; however, it could also be used between multiple single family houses or neighbors. We are yet to be able to offer an entire dumpster for composting, but we hope to get there in years to come.

We handle billing a little different with our commercial style service. We charge a per pick up fee, rather than a monthly fee. This cost is determined by how many totes you have on site. The more totes on site, the lower the price per tote, per pick up. If you are associated with a nonprofit, please ask about our not for profit pricing. We do all of our invoicing monthly and you can pay via card or check. We try to stick with a weekly or bi-weekly frequency for the same reason you wouldn't want your regular trash to sit for an extended period of time. We can entertain potential other options depending on the volume of compostable waste. This is a great way to get your friends and family involved and share the cost of composting. If this style of service interests you, coordinate with you neighbors or tell your favorite restaurant about our service, and please reach out so we can create a composting solution that works for your needs.



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