

WINTER NEWSLETTER



COMPOST CLUB UPDATES

Greeting from the Urban Canopy!
So much has happened here since the New Year and we are excited to be using a whole new software, called StopSuite. One of our favorite features of StopSuite is the member portal where you can cancel your own stops, keep track of how much weight you have composted so far this year, and see your environmental impact! Moreover you can access the shiny new online store via your member portal to purchase extra materials pick ups and soil! We plan to add more options to our store so keep your eyes peeled~ and, as always, you can email us with requests and questions at compost@theurbancanopy.org

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!

Holiday Tree, Oh Holiday Tree!

We offered our services again this year to pick up and haul your Holiday trees to the various spots set up through the city where the trees will be re-purposed as mulch. We are hoping to continue to expand this service to more specialty picks ups throughout the year. This was an opportunity for us to begin utilizing the new software, StopSuite, to reimagine how we can more easily provide a variety of services to our members. We picked up over 125 Holiday trees from members and non-members alike this year and we hope to increase that number next year.

Shout out to Urban Canopy's Outdoor Farm

We are so excited to report that our Outdoor farm has been nominated by Chicago Reader for Best Urban Farm of 2022! As we like to say here at Urban Canopy, "Grow Team Grow! What makes Urban Canopy so special is our goal of encapsulating the entirety of the urban food cycle and a huge factor in accomplishing that goal is our outdoor farm or as we like to call it, "OFarm." We make this distinction because we also have an indoor farm or IFarm where we grow wheatgrass and microgreens.

To give you all a little background information: OFarm is a commercial food production farm, on roughly two acres of land in Auburn Gresham neighborhood. OFarm is a collaboratively run farm practicing bio-intensive planting with OMRI-certified integrated pest management and organic amendments. The finished compost OFarm uses in their plant beds is from WeCare Denali - Harbor View Composting Facility, which is where Compost Club's materials from at-home pick ups are processed. Furthermore, the crops OFarm grows are then used on our LUCSA (Local Unified Community Supported Agriculture) shares and delivered straight to your home, or can be found at our Farmer's Market stands through out the city.

Below is a picture of the OFarm. Sure is beautiful and is making us a little nostalgic for spring time!



If you feel so inclined to spread the word among your friends and neighbors we would greatly appreciate the support in the form of a vote!

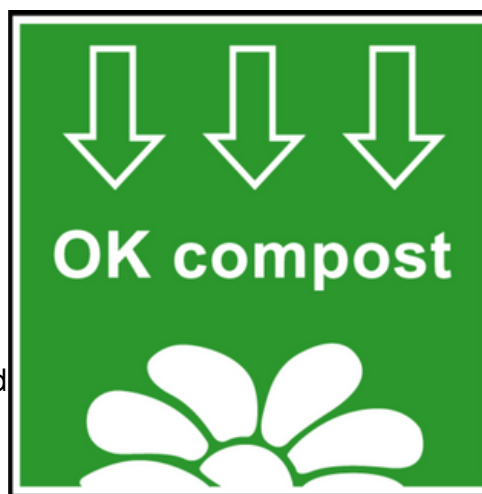
[Here is the link to the Chicago Reader](#)

Please vote for The Urban Canopy under "Best Urban Farm" under the "Food and Drink" category. We thank you for your continued support because by partnering with at least Urban Canopy's Compost Club you are helping to support our farm as well. The final date to vote is February 15th.

What does "Compostable" Even Mean?

There are many products out there these days that claim to be "compostable," but what does that even mean? You certainly have to be careful because there are many products that use what we refer to as "green washing" to sell more and take advantage of environmentally conscientious folks. We see it all the time where companies use environmentally friendly buzzwords like, "biodegradable" or "compostable," to make their product seem more environmentally friendly when in actuality their product isn't at all or is only partially compostable. This might mean that a product only breaks down under the certain conditions or that it does technically break down, but microscopic plastics will still be present in the soil. furthermore, we see products that have compostable parts, but aren't actually compostable as a whole. For example, a coffee bag might have a papery exterior that is compostable, but the interior is lined with a material that isn't compostable and difficult if not impossible to fully remove.

When in doubt about a product feel free to shoot us an email to ask, but what we look for when determining if something is commercially compostable is if it has the proper certification. There are two certification that are a sure fire way to knowing if we can accept the product: a BPI is what we look for in American products and there is also TUV home or industrial that is an Austrian certification that is actually more stringent than the American BPI. To make things more confusing, even within the name of the certification we like to see, there is a word we are wary of: biodegradable. This is to say that just because something is "biodegradable" doesn't mean its "compostable" in our sense of the word. There are a few images below of the certifications referenced above.



INDUSTRIAL



BPI ®

COMPOSTABLE IN INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

Check locally, as these do not exist in many communities. **Not suitable for backyard composting.** CERT # SAMPLE

University of Chicago Student Partners: Phoenix Sustainability

We had the pleasure recently to go on a short tour of various student run cafe's on the University of Chicago Campus. The Urban Canopy is proud to partner with a student lead organizing at [The University of Chicago called Phoenix Sustainability Initiative](#). This group has many facets that all work towards making the University of Chicago and surrounding Hyde Park area more sustainable. We have been working closely with Chloe, a senior now, who has worked so diligently at getting students composting around campus as well as setting up composting at various student centers and cafes. It is so refreshing to get a perspective on composting and environmentalism from a college student, so we ask Chloe some questions that are on the following page along with a great picture of our friends at Phoenix Sustainability.

How did you first hear of and then get involved in composting?

"When I was in high school my school cafeteria had three different waste bins, including one labeled "compost." Unfortunately though, the compost bin was actually just going to the trash (and eventually a landfill). So a few friends and I started looking into changing that, and ever since I've been thinking about sustainable waste diversion and the challenges that our current waste infrastructure poses to reducing the volume of material (organic or otherwise) that we send to landfills, contributing to pollution and greenhouse emissions."

Why do you think its important to compost at a University?

"Instituting composting infrastructure is all about pushing for more sustainable intuitional infrastructure. Sending solid waste to landfills via massive waste haulers is the easiest and bureaucratically most frictionless way to manage waste on the scale of the huge university campus. Unfortunately though, it's also a dead end point of an already unsustainable food and organic material chain that contributes to land, water, and air pollution as well as greenhouse emissions. Composting is also unfortunately a practice that has taken on a number of myths about how difficult it is to do successfully or what a liability it can become for operations teams. Student groups across the country (and right at UChicago!) are working to dispel those myths by demonstrating how easy it can really be in a number of settings (residences, offices, dorms, cafes, and even dining halls!). Furthermore, we are seeing Universities begin to make lofty carbon reduction goals, which can be made up of extremely costly (though also necessary) emission reductions measures. Waste infrastructure improvements are comparatively really low hanging fruit when it comes to making a positive impact. I also think composting can be the first step in imagining more circular material flows. It's by far not the only gap we need to close in terms of more sustainable food and organic material systems, but by turning organic material back into nutrient rich soil additives, we can begin to see the possibilities for beginnings rather than ends in piles of 'waste.'"

Do you see yourself staying involved with composting in some facet after you graduate? If yes, what might that be?

I certainly hope so! I'm hooked on residential composting so I imagine I'll always have a scrap bucket in my kitchen. Otherwise, I'd love to think more about how we can shift the burden of composting/recycling onto municipal and industrial entities rather than putting the onus on individuals to "make more sustainable choices." I think there is a place for a scrap bucket in every kitchen, but I'd like to see that made possible by governments and the corporations responsible for the environmental crisis we are living through.

What's your favorite class you've taken at University of Chicago?

Probably a class about the commons in Early Modern Europe (which were huge tracts of land lived off of and owned in common), which introduced me to the brilliant and burgeoning field of environmental history, the history of capitalism, and also dispelled, for me, the commonly held, icky belief in the "tragedy of the commons." Though I also really loved a series of classes I took on global energy histories beginning with early human societies up to the present day.



Some Tips and Tricks for Winter Produce: What to do with Root Veg?



Roasted root veggies are a personal favorite of ours here at Urban Canopy. We know that root veggies can get a little monotonous or tiresome during these winter months, especially when the sun just refuses to peak out of the clouds! But don't let root veggies get you down too. There are so many different ways to prepare these hardy winter produce. We hope to give you some options here or at least some new ideas to get the juices flowing.

While rosemary, sage and thyme are always a perfect flavor combination for roasted root veg, you might try curry powder, paprika or some other warmer spices like nutmeg and mace. Just be careful because a little bit of a warm spice goes a long way! If you want to show off some knife skills try cutting your root veggies on a bias, or really class up your dinner by making Gratin.

Another quick tip to getting a nice brown color on your roasted veggies is heating your tray up in the oven beforehand. This will allow your veggies to get a nice caramelization without getting mushy. Don't be shy to puree those roasted root veggies as well and make delicious soup, or leave them cut up for a more rustic feel. Moreover, potatoes aren't the only thing that mash! A turnip and parsnip mash can be out of this world. Winter is also the perfect time to ramp up your salad game. A "multi-textural salad" can be absolutely fantastic. Roasted sweet potato, on a bed of greens with pomegranate seeds, crushed toasted walnuts, and goat cheese. Switch out that potato with some roasted beets and a raw but thinly sliced turnip. The sky is the limit for getting creative with salads!

We also enjoy a roasted root veggies bowl, where you serve your roasted veggies over wild rice, farro, barely, or quinoa. We highly suggest boiling these harder grains with veggie or chicken stock or bullion to add more flavor. Have fun with cooking and experiment until you find what you like. Follow our Instagram for more recipes and cooking tips.

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