

WINTER'24 NEWSLETTER



COMPOST CLUB UPDATES

Winter is nearly over, or so the groundhog reported. There are hints of warm weather in the air, but still a chance for snow! So it goes in Chicago, but hey! we like seasons here right?!

If you didn't know, Urban Canopy's compost club does events! Since we specialize in helping you divert compostable waste from landfills, we can do it at weddings, parties and other social gatherings too. Check out more information later in the newsletter or check out our [event website right here!](#)

The best way to spread the word about composting is through you! Click the "Give \$10 Get \$10" button on your member portal and refer a friend to join Compost Club and you will both receive \$10.00 off your next invoice.

Here is a great resource to info your friends and family about the [importance and benefits of composting](#). You can email us with any requests and questions to 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 season! We are so excited to continue to welcome new members, expand our service area, and build our community.

Our favorite part of Urban Canopy is our unique company structure. Not only does our Compost Club practice organic waste hauling, which helps support our circular economic philosophy, but it also helps support other aspects of our company. The Urban Canopy, as a whole, encapsulates the entirety of the urban food cycle. We have a beautiful [farm](#) in Auburn-Gresham, we participate in [farmers markets](#) around the city, including the Daley Center Market, an outstanding [LUCSA](#) group that delivers fresh local produce to your door, a robust [distribution](#) branch that partners with local restaurants to provide organic, local foods, and a dynamite processing kitchen that innovates fantastic preserved foods.

URBAN CANOPY'S "COMMERCIAL" STYLE HAULING SERVICE



Compost Club distinguishes our two types of service as "Residential" and "Commercial," but that might be a bit of a misnomer considering it really only breaks down into whether a 5 gallon bucket is the right size for your composting needs or a 35 gallon rolling tote. Using one of our 35 gallon totes isn't just for commercial spaces like restaurants or warehouses, really any one can use either of the sizes! If you and your co-workers have lunch in the office or it can be for you and your family, friends or neighbors as well. Sharing your compost collection service this way is a great way to get more people involved in joining their local food cycle and save some money while you are at it. We like composting through community.

For many businesses these days, "Going Green" is an incentive on its own. There are many bottom line benefits to making a company more sustainable. Besides reducing methane gas emissions, compost improves soil structures for water retention and reduces the need for fertilizers and pesticides. Furthermore, you could also reduce your waste services bill. Composting can be an essential part of "going green" thus helping a company land more customers, clients and even employees, as more folks seek out employment at Companies with green initiatives.

Implementing a composting system in your office space, HOA, or restaurant is simply a matter of restructuring waste removal protocol after which, composting will become a seamless aspect of your daily business operations. It is also quite easy for us to adjust your frequency if you find your business is composting more or less than initially thought. If you or anyone you know runs a non-for-profit that is interested in composting let them know that we do offer a discounted rate for NFP's.

Logistically speaking with our commercial style compost club, we offer a 35 gallon rolling tote or a 7 gallon bucket that we swap out in their entirety each service day with a freshly sanitized and lined tote. We ask that the tote is located in an easily accessible location on your pick up day. Your pick up day is determined by your physical address. We divide the city into geographical zones that are attributed to a day of week to ensure our routes are as geographically dense as possible thus ensuring lower emission levels.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email us at compost@theurbancanopy.org and ask for Andrew!



A SHOUT OUT TO OUR FRIENDS AT:

What we traditionally hear about restaurants and the pandemic is often tragic; however, there is the occasional story with a silver lining! We are happy to point out our friends at Cellar Door Provision. After closing their doors for a time during the pandemic, they have not only reopened, but earned themselves a Michelin Bib Gourmand award, which is for good value and quality food.

CELLAR DOOR
provisions

Cellar Door Provisions, closed their doors in December of 2021, and after honing in and scaling back operations, reopened in late summer of 2022 with a beautifully redone interior and patio (always a Chicago favorite.) Their wine list supports 30-40 different bottles that compliment an ever changing limited food menu of about 9 to 10 seasonally based dishes. They focus on local sourcing and partner with many Midwestern farmers like Froggy Meadow Farm and Earnest Earth right here in Garfield Park. Cellar Door has been described as Mediterranean, primarily inspired by French, Italian, and Spanish cuisines. What is also super cool about Cellar Door Provisions is their dedication to fermentation! Chef Ethan Pikas makes their own fish sauce, miso, mustards and vinegars to be used in a variety of their dishes. For example currently on the menu you can try a cured honey nut squash with roasted porcini and a vinaigrette of juiced squash and pepper brine or the mussel escabeche, which is traditionally a Spanish cuisine that utilizes cooking or pickling with a vinegar based sauce.



Photo courtesy of Time Out and Cellar Door Provisions

If you are looking for a new spot to try head into Logan square to try some awesome and seasonal vegetarian and seafood based dishes with a beautiful pairing of natural wine or just one or the other! Cellar Door Provisions provides a minimalistic atmosphere, with a no-nonsense style of cooking. The Michelin guide remarks that the “seasoning is spot-on and the flavors are clear.” Chef Pikas is quoted in the [Chicago Eater](#) saying, “The philosophy behind our food matches the philosophy behind natural wine, which is trying to tamper with things as little as possible and just letting the wine or the food speak for itself...” We are proud to say that we compost with the folks at Cellar Door Provisions, but go check it out for yourself!

FOOD SCRAP DEHYDRATORS

We end up seeing ads for these all day on social media and it seems like there is a new model and company producing these items everyday. Companies like: Lomi, Reencle, Tero, and even Vitamix sell what they advertise as “countertop composters” for anywhere between \$200 upwards of \$600! We’ve said it before and likely feel the need to say it again, but these “countertop composters” are nothing more than a food dehydrator, and dehydrated Food does not equal compost!

Now, we aren’t saying there isn’t a place for one of these devices, but it is important to note that the device is not accomplishing what most of those companies claim it does. Urban Canopy’s Compost Club isn’t the only one saying so any more. The US Council of Composters has made an official statement that we have linked. One of the main concerns here is obfuscating the public’s experience with and understanding of the word “compost.” While the material that these “countertop composters” create, which more accurately should be defined as dehydrated or pretreated materials,” do have usefulness as a feedstock for other composting processes and applications. This dehydrated material however will not have the same nutritious effects on your house plants or in your garden like a finished compost product would.

What is important to note in the linked statement above is the specific definition of “compost” and what we at Urban Canopy tend to call “finished compost” or our Healthy Soil compost product. Things can get a little confusing when the word “compost” refers to multiple different uses: foods scraps that are compostable could be “compost.” The process under which that material becomes a product is known as “composting” as well as the finished product itself is known as “compost.” So much compost! Even though this can be confusing it doesn’t mean that “compost” is just anything related to food waste.



Don’t let these clever ads like this one to the left or this video here trick you. At the end of the day, composting is a smelly and messy process that produces an essential product for healthy gardens and farms. These “countertop composters” only take the materials part of the way there. This youtuber does a fairly extensive look at the Lomi and it’s uses. He even chats with the CEO. By the end of the video, it is pretty clear that it is not worth it. For those folks who do use it, they must provide further treatment to the dehydrated materials to make it into a viable compost product. Stay wary out there and thanks for composting!

SUPPORTING LOCAL POLLINATORS WITH GREEN SPACES!

You've probably heard or seen a news article about the disappearances of bees and the effect this has on not only local environments, but many agricultural crops worldwide. This problem, like many environmental issues might seem insurmountable, especially when large corporations are largely to blame, but there are still ways, locally, to provide for pollinators, even in a small way, that still matters!

Pollinators are in trouble around the world mainly due to human development as concrete significantly fragment and reduce pollinator's environments. Everyone knows about bees, but did you know that birds, bats, butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps, smaller mammals and even flies are all pollinators as well? Providing green spaces or pollinators also means more oxygen for us, and more places to absorb rain water and snow run off helping with water conservation. Moreover, it is simply more visually appealing and can literally lower the temp of the neighborhood. Despite living in a city, it is still important for us to considering the space we live in as part of the environment as opposed to something separate from the environment. Scholars such as Bruno Latour remind us that viewing the natural world as one separate from humanity is not only ethically problematic but empirically false!



Microorganisms in our gut and on our skin help our bodies function, as pollinators help produce the food we eat. Trees and phytoplankton provide oxygen we need to live from the carbon dioxide we breath out. Considering ourselves as a part of this cycle lends itself to the importance of maintaining space for our pollinating friends.

You might wonder what does this even look like? There are super awesome local and national groups to keep on eye out for and even partner with if you have green space you are interested in transforming into a native landscapes. But you can do things on your own!

- Growing Native flowering plants.
 - Here is a list of local pollinator plants.
- Plant in the sun.
 - pollinators and their plants love lots of sun.
- Provide long-lasting blooms and plant in groups
 - The list above provides what plants bloom and when, its good to have variety.
- No insecticides!
 - This is the worst as it will kill pollinators.



RADISHES: DON'T OVER LOOK THEM

You might be thinking like we do sometimes and say: "what do I do with all these radishes every winter?" Well, there are a variety of ways to prepare radishes that can keep them refreshing and interesting all winter long!

You don't always have to eat them raw, though raw radishes sliced, quartered or even whole with some high quality butter and flaky salt on a fresh baguette is an amazing classic French breakfast, and good for a snack any time of the day. Another way to utilize a wonderful raw radish is to thinly julienne them and toss them in a light vinaigrette to add as a garish to a hot dish like Risotto or Congee. These can bring a chili crunch to your warm winter rice dish. Using radishes in this way as a topping for your tacos isn't a bad idea as well.



Radishes can be roasted too! Invite some radishes to join the party of any tray of root veggies or roast them by their lonesome. By introducing heat to a radish, the veggie is transformed into a whole new buttery, sweet vegetable. Cut your radishes in half, toss them in some oil and salt, then roast them on the flat side down to get a nice golden brown color. While the oven is a great spot to take your radish from a peppery flavor to a sweet one, don't be afraid to pop them on the grill too. Considering this warm, dry El Nino winter you very well might get a chance to have a grill day sooner than you think! You can also try this pickling recipe below.

Pickled Daikon Radish:

- 1lb radish (Daikon or another radish)
 - 1 cup water
 - 1 cup rice wine vinegar
 - 1 cup white sugar
 - 1 tablespoon salt
 - 1 tablespoon red chili pepper
1. Wash and peel your radish and slice to desired thickness. 1/8 in on a mandolin works well
 2. Heat liquids with sugar and salt until dissolved
 3. Add radish and chilis to large mason jar(s) (27-32 oz)
 4. Add heated liquid brine to mason jar.
 5. Let jar cool before refrigerating and enjoy after 1-2 days.
 6. Radishes should stay good for 2-3 weeks. After 2 weeks they will be less crisp.



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Vol .07 Newsletter