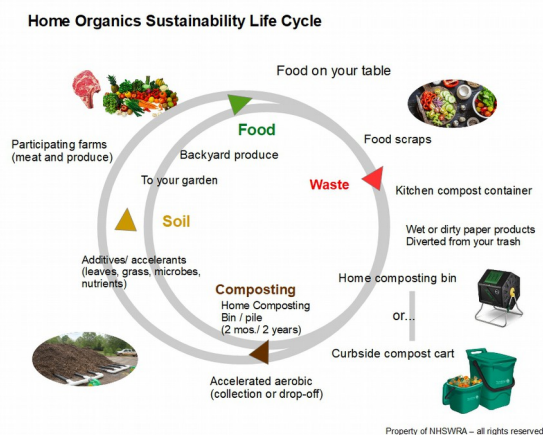


Recycle-News-Haven

The NHSWRA Newsletter

information on solid waste and recycling
of concern to the New Haven CT community

Composting and Organics – DO try this at home!



YOU'VE BEEN SEPARATING your recyclables from your household trash. You have just put out your blue toter for pickup and sit down to a pizza dinner at your table. You finish eating and scrape your plate, gather your napkins and greasy pizza box and throw it all in the trash can.... Wait!! Some food and compostable paper products are recyclable through composting – a process that breaks down these materials and produces soil or soil-enriching products.

Twenty-five percent (1/4) of household waste is food waste and other waste that is compostable. and it can ALL be recycled. Furthermore, the household is a big source of all of this type of waste generated in the U.S. – about 40%! As it stands, most household food waste and other compostables in the U.S. is put in landfills, and a good portion of it in CT is incinerated at waste-to-energy plants. As landfill, this waste is far from harmless – it generates uncontrolled methane – a gas that is 20 times more detrimental than CO2 as a pollutant. And as you can probably imagine, food waste does not burn efficiently!

So what can you do about this situation? First, let's see what is actually divertible from your trash as compostable...

Biodegradable Waste, composting services and home composting

Biodegradable waste includes any organic matter in waste which can be broken down into carbon dioxide, water, methane or simple organic molecules. It includes materials for composting, either

commercial or home. But it is important to know that many biodegradable materials as proclaimed on packaging are not compostable. Also, not all commercially compostable materials are compostable at home. (see chart below)

Here are your options:

Composting services

Don't feel like doing your own composting? Services are available through collection or drop-off centers local to your area. These services typically provide collection bins (and sometimes smaller kitchen bins as well) and charge a small fee per pick-up or drop off. Where do your compostables go from there? You can usually donate the equivalent amount of recycled product to organic farms and collectives, or have the soil product returned to you!

Composting at home

Don't feel like paying extra money to have your organics collected? You can save money and divert as much as 500 pounds of organics a year from your trash by recycling at home. Don't just throw your stuff in the back yard, however. In order to compost efficiently you should follow these guidelines:

- o find a spot away from your house and neighbors, in the shade
- o protect from animal intrusion
- o add layers of household compostables and grass/leaves alternately
- o moisten if necessary
- o check temperature periodically

See chart above for what is acceptable (and not) as home composting.

Also, keep in mind that your pile may produce strong odors and attract animals and insects, so protect and place your composting area accordingly!

Although there is admittedly a little more work involved in separating your compostables, and more money out of your household budget if you choose the convenience of having them picked up or dropping them off, there is an expense benefit down the line: More materials will be diverted from trash at curbside, which will ultimately bring costs for trash pickup down. And the benefits across the board are many: Less harmful emissions, less energy wasted in processing, and a more sustainable

Composting and Acceptable Materials

Composting Services (Aerobic)	Home Composting	NOT acceptable In Home Compost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits and vegetables Cheese, yogurt Eggs (shell only) Meat, poultry, seafood Bones Nuts, shells Food-soiled fibers (paper towels, napkins) Cardboard food containers (flat-top) Compostable tableware – not PFAS Coffee grounds, filter, tea and tea bags Wetted coffee filters, napkins, wet wipes Small yard clippings (no pesticides) <p>Pick-up services Or drop-off locations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruits and vegetables Cigar/butts Breads and grains Coffee grounds and filters Tea bags Tea bags Bed sheets Shredded newspaper Cardboard Paper (not colored) Yard trimmings Grass clippings Houseplants (not diseased) Hay or straw Leaves Shredded Wood chips Cotton and Wool (tags) Hair and fur Fireplace ashes <p>Home composting How-to's, Composter kits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat, fish, bones Painy products Any material treated w/pesticide Waxy paper oil or grease Disposable tableware w/“PFAS” Baby diapers Most Clothing Human waste, urine <p>*PFAS - additives that resist grease stains or water which do not breakdown and are harmful to the body</p>

farm system, since nutrients are re-introduced into the soil. Not to mention a growing sector of business along with more jobs.

Hey, it turns out that doing the right thing can also be the smart thing!



Awareness

Where the Debris meets the Sea: ocean garbage patches



In our last issue of R-N-H, you may recall we talked about single-use plastics. Let's travel further down the "chain" and focus on one of the main areas where they end up: The ocean...

A plastic water bottle gets thrown out of a car window; several more get blown off a recycling truck. They all meet at the storm drain and head to the river, eventually joining others in the ocean that have been illegally dumped there, waiting for them. From there, they ride the coastal currents and eventually end up congregating with millions of others at that hot-spot for garbage: The Gyre.

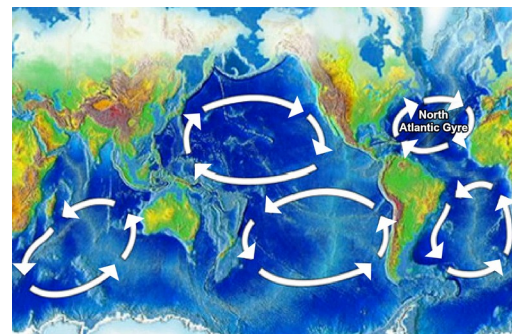
It's hard to imagine how immense these oceanic garbage patches are, and that they are generated from such 'humble' origins as a casual toss to the side of the road. Of these patches (6 in all) the largest is in the North Pacific and is estimated to be the size of France! The North Atlantic patch (where you can visit those discarded water bottles from our area) is not far behind in size.. and depth as well: micro-plastics generated by detergents, personal care products and textiles often extend far below the waterline, so small they are undetected by the human eye. It is these smaller particles that are detrimental to the health of all life, because they enter the food chain when aquatic life ingests them, but cannot *digest* them. These microscopic bits then can become part of your seafood dinner, finding a new home in you! (It is estimated that we ingest and retain the weight of a credit-card worth of plastic a week.) Rather than talk about tons/year, which is hard to visualize, think about this: By 2050, it is estimated that the amount of plastic in the oceans will weigh more than all the fish in the ocean!

Sounds like a horror story, and it is. Although there have been attempts at introducing technology to clean the oceans of all such debris, including plastics, these attempts have thus far fallen way short, in large part due to the amount of man/woman hours it would take for such efforts to even begin to reduce the size of these junk-gyres (see map). This is mainly because once the debris gets there, it stays there. Not only are the currents keeping it in place (it doesn't wash up on land, which would actually be an easier collection point), but plastic in particular is very slow to biodegrade – some of it takes 500 years or more!

So it remains for us to find ways to slow or stop the amount of plastics that flow toward the sea. Concerted efforts to reduce usage and eliminate plastic packaging wherever possible could serve us well.

Meanwhile, the pile grows. Crude oil prices are falling, spurring an increase in 'virgin' plastic production, even as innovators introducing chemical breakdown recycling and uniformity of plastic compound manufacturing struggle to make it more cost effective to recycle single-use plastic.

There are no easy solutions. But it all starts with awareness and knowing that we can make a difference in how we consume, one person at a time...



The major Oceanic Gyres, each generating and perpetuating its own massive “garbage patch”

Recycling Events

Global Recycling Day – March 18

An initiative of the Global Recycling Foundation, Global Recycling Day encourages us to think of “waste” as “wasted resources.” For more on their events and contest, visit <https://www.globalrecyclingday.com/>

Earth Day – April 22

Though we all may not be able to get out there for Earth Day this year (April 22), we can still participate on some level and become more aware of the challenges that face our planet. For more information on events and this year's themes, visit <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021/>

For our part, The Authority is wading in on Organics Recycling awareness. Stay tuned for upcoming promotions at the New Haven Transfer Station.

Earth Day Events in New Haven:

Rock to Rock Earth Day bike ride, April 24

<https://www.raceentry.com/rock-to-rock-earth-day-bike-ride/race-information>



Our House New Faces at NHSWRA

The Authority welcomes three new members to its Board of Directors!

Rose Bonito

Domingo Medina

Maggie Targove



Resources

City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

New Haven Public Works info:

Resident Services:

Spring is at the doorstep. Once again, leaf bags and yard waste will dot the curb. Residents are reminded as April begins, Trash and Recycling will pick up leaf bags that are paper, compostable, contain no branches, dirt or rocks and placed out at the curb on your day of your refuse collection.

Yard waste will only be picked up at the curb *if* branches are 4 feet in length and tied in bundles not exceeding one foot in diameter. Residents also have the option of delivering unbundled yard waste to the Residential Waste Center with free coupons picked up with a valid id at Residents Office, 34 Middletown Avenue Monday- Friday 7 – 4pm.

Remember you can always report Public Works issues at **See Click Fix** found on New Haven City website (see “Links,” below).

Links:

What’s New Page- https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/whats_new_.htm
New Haven Public Works- <https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>
See Click Fix- <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

NHSWRA link and contact info:

www.nhswra.com



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