**Compost**

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic matter to replenish the soil and nourish plant growth. The composting process creates ideal conditions for the rapid decomposition of organic materials, such as vegetable and fruit peels, egg shells, coffee grounds and tea leaves, grass clippings, dead leaves and paper. Once organic materials are decomposed, compost is the dark, crumbly material that looks and feels like soil, enriches your garden with nutrients and helps the soil hold moisture.

When we compost, we reduce the amount of organic waste we send to the landfill. According to Susan Antler, executive director of the Compost Council of Canada, if all of us (industry, restaurants, and private citizens) composted, we could reduce the amount of garbage in our landfills by about half.

**Did You Know?** Roughly 40-60% of the waste in our landfills

 is compostable organic matter.

**Vermicomposting**
One pound of red wiggler worms can eat a pound of veggies or junk mail every two days and transform it into soil 11 times more powerful than regular compost alone. Vermicomposting is fun for the whole family and ideal for indoor composting year-round. Worms create one pail of nutrient-rich castings for every 40 pails of waste. For a great site on worm composting, visit “All Things Organic” at [www.allthingsorganic.com](http://www.allthingsorganic.com/).

**Backyard composters**
There are many options for backyard composters, from home made versions to locally purchase vinyl compost bins. For a great site on composting visit the Compost Council of Canada at [www.compost.org](http://www.compost.org/) To build your own composter, check out: [www.rrfb.com/build-your-own-composter.asp](http://www.rrfb.com/build-your-own-composter.asp)

**Bokashi**
A fermenting system which allows you to compost cheese, breads, eggs, fish, small bones and meat, as well as your regular vegetable compostables. Compact and works well in offices and homes. For more on Bokashi go to [www.bokashicycle.com](http://www.bokashicycle.com)

**Methane**
Landfills bury waste. When buried, organic materials are cut off from air and decompose very slowly. Newspapers from 40 years ago can still be found relatively intact in landfills. Decomposition in the absence of air, or anaerobic decomposition, produces methane gas. Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that has 12 times the heating power of carbon dioxide. As rain or groundwater percolates through the landfill, weak acids produced by decaying organic matter wash through the landfill and react with the other trash, creating a potentially toxic leachate that can contaminate groundwater, lakes, and streams. The systems that must be designed to capture methane gas and collect leachate make landfills expensive to build and operate. A compost pile, on the other hand, undergoes aerobic decomposition. Since the organics are exposed to oxygen, either by turning the pile or through the use of worms and other living organisms, the compost pile produces carbon dioxide instead of methane.