

SORTING IT OUT

Composting is a good way to do your part

Composting food and yard waste is one of the easiest and most impactful things an individual can do to reduce their contribution to climate change.

What is compost? Compost is the valuable resource that is produced through the aerobic decomposition of food scraps, yard waste, and other organic materials. The same process occurs on the forest floor, but with composting, we are actively speeding it up. The final product of compost is a magical material that can be added to soil in gardens and lawns that will increase water infiltration and retention, add microbiology and nutrients, and can even filter pollutants.

Why compost? In addition to the benefits to the soil, keeping food scraps out of the trash reduces the production of greenhouse gases. When food scraps go to the landfill, they don't break down into soil but instead rot in anaerobic conditions (without oxygen) and produce methane which is many times more powerful than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. Locally, it's also important to keep this material out of the trash because the Central Landfill in Johnston is on track to be full in 20 years. Once it's full, we may have to ship our trash out of state which will cost taxpayers a lot of money.

How to compost? In South Kingstown and Narragansett, residents have a few options for composting their food scraps. First, you can

have a bin, tumbler, or pile in your backyard. If you're worried about wildlife or odors, there are many easy ways to reduce these potential issues (call me!). If you'd rather outsource the composting efforts, there are four totes at the Rose Hill Transfer Station for free food scrap drop off, or you can hire Black Earth Compost for curbside hauling.

To help local efforts to keep food scraps out of the landfill, the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett received a grant from RI Resource Recovery to distribute backyard compost bins to residents for free. Each town will host a workshop in November where attendees will learn the basics of starting and maintaining their bin. Residents must attend the workshop to receive a free bin. Workshop dates will be announced soon and will be on town websites, social media, and flyers around town.

If you're interested in attending the workshop and getting a free bin, please contact me, the Recycling Coordinator, at 401.789.9331 x2259 or ccanner@southkingstownri.gov

'Sorting It Out' is a recurring column of The Independent Newspaper that features recycling and composting tips from Charlotte Canner, the Recycling Coordinator for the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett it will appear monthly in the newspaper.