

ATTENTION GILMANTON RESIDENTS

Black Gold

For those of you interested in saving money, please read on. What can you do in your spare time for little or no cost to **save money**, increase your **growth** potential and **reap** the benefits for generations to come? The answer is composting...yes, composting and the Recycling Committee recommends that you give it a try. How can composting possibly save money, increase growth potential and benefit future generations? Many of us used to ask that same question until we got hooked on composting.

Composting is easy. It's a way to take what we have in abundance and make better use of it and it's a way to give something back to the Earth. Approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of all household waste is organic and perfect for composting. By putting that waste into a compost heap you will have less garbage to bag up, so you'll save on bags and the time to bag and haul it to the Recycling Facility.

To turn that waste into "black gold", you will first need a compost area fit to your particular interest and needs. There are many sizes, shapes and styles of composting units. The area can be as simple as a stable stack of used tires or you can order composting bins for a reasonable price at the Recycling Facility. Next you will need waste materials, which should be easy to find. Organic kitchen waste such as fruit or vegetable rinds and cores, coffee grounds and egg shells are great composting candidates as are the things found in your yard. That means things like grass clippings, leaves, branches and weeds, so don't bag them up. Use them. They all have a variety of nutrients that help create great compost. Now add some air and a bit of moisture to keep the pile healthy. The final ingredient to this process is patience while the microorganisms do their thing. They seem to come out of nowhere, like the elves that helped the cobbler, and set to work breaking down the plant tissue. They are joined by Fungi and protoplasm to further the decay process and then are joined by the final team to work for you: the beetles, centipedes and worms. They finish off the job to create the final product: a rich dark brown crumbly earthy smelling substance that some folks call humus...others call it Black Gold.

The process can take years or just weeks depending on conditions and your participation. The more heat that is generated in the pile, the faster it will decompose. By actively adding assorted layers of materials to the pile, watering as needed and rotating to increase circulation your compost will heat up and break down much faster than if you take a passive approach. But even a pile left to fend for itself will still yield rich compost.

When compost is added to the soil it adds nutrients and improves the texture of the soil, so plants thrive. It allows sandy soil to retain more moisture and clay becomes lighter. Better soil conditions promote healthier plants and healthy plants help to clean our air and conserve the soil. Better soil may also encourage you to grow your own vegetables which is a benefit to your health and your budget.

So, why not give composting a try? It's something the whole family can do and benefit from. For more information check out the resources at the town's Corner Library, the Internet or the booklet that comes with the composting.

Speaking of something the whole family can do, remember that Earth Day is April 22, 2011. Join the town wide clean up by putting trash found along the road in the Blue Bags available at the Recycling Facility and the Town Hall. Your neighborhood will look nicer and the town will earn points for each bag of trash picked up. If you're on Route 107, 140 or 129 the bags can be left by the side of the road

for pick up. Just notify Justin at the Recycling Facility or leave word at the Town Hall that there are bags to be picked up.

Don't forget to order your compost bins and rain barrels. For those that are interested, please see Justin at the Recycling Facility. He's taking orders until the end of April.

Remember, "Recycling Pays" and the Recycling Committee invites all the residents of Gilmanton to participate in the town's recycling future.

Thank you.