

Dollars and Dirt – September 2015

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Whole Kids Foundation Grants

Deadline: October 31, 2015

Awarded: February 2016

Link: <https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/schools/programs/school-garden-grant-program>

Grantwriting Tips:

<https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/downloads/pdfs/grant-writing-tips-2015.pdf>

Download application ahead of time:

https://www.wholekidsfoundation.org/images/wysiwyg-uploads/2016_School_Garden_Grant_Application-Canada.pdf

Slow Food Denver Grant Boilerplate, click on the Grants button to download:

<http://slowfooddenver.org.s179438.gridserver.com/garden-leader-tools/>

Composting Resources

http://www.cvswwmd.org/uploads/6/1/2/6/6126179/do_the_rot_thing_cvswwmd1.pdf

Composting Yard Waste

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/07212.html>

All about bokashi

<http://www.the-compost-gardener.com/bokashicomposting.html>

http://www.gardensfromgarbage.org/home/faq_about_bokashi_composting

<http://www.sustainableamerica.org/blog/bokashi-composting/>

Recommended Signs

1. Finished Compost
2. Add Material—Cut to 4", No weeds with seeds or flowers, No food scraps, No mint or bindweed
3. Dry Material—Cut to 4", Leaves, small sticks, Dried plants

Bokashi is probably one of the least expensive composting systems around. A commercial Bokashi bucket consists of a five-pound plastic bin with a tight-fitting lid on top and a spigot near the bottom. This may seem a bit steep at almost seventy dollars, but that spigot might be the difference between a process that's easy and one that's unmanageable. The leachate needs to be poured off and lifting a five-pound bucket full of soggy kitchen waste and its run-off is beyond many. A kitchen baster might be useful for this otherwise messy process.

The only other equipment required is the inoculated bokashi bran; a bag of it usually comes with the initial purchase and 2 pound replacements cost about fifteen dollars each.

Getting Started

The process itself is about as simple as it gets. Perhaps once a day you mix your kitchen waste (including meats and dairy products!) with a handful or so of Bokashi (basically enough to coat it lightly) then press them into the bin, sprinkle another handful of bran over them, and close the lid. (A plate or a layer of plastic over the pile helps seal it against the little air left in the bucket.) Large bones will not, of course, disappear over the course of ten days. The directions recommend cutting up small bones and even chopping other items into small pieces for maximum efficiency. If one chose to skip the chopping step, a few extra days' fermentation time would probably reduce the larger pieces to thoroughly fermented mush.

When the bin is full, cover it tightly and set it aside somewhere in the house where it's out of direct sunlight for ten days or so. Every other day, draw off the liquid, which can apparently be used as a fertilizer (in a very diluted form) or full strength to control slime in drains, pipes and septic systems.

After ten to fourteen days, the waste in the tub should be thoroughly pickled. It can then be dug into a fallow patch of the garden.

Maintenance

Bokashi is an anaerobic process. It needs to be kept as free from oxygen as possible. It's important, therefore, to compress each day's waste flat into the container so as to eliminate any air pockets and to avoid stirring up the previous day's waste when putting in new garbage. Drawing off liquid regularly helps maintain the environment needed by the bacteria that break down the organic materials. That liquid needs to be used within a day or so.

Some people feed pickled Bokashi material to their vermicomposting worms, apparently with no problems. Given how acidic the Bokashi process (and product!) are, and how sensitive worms can be to acidic environments, it may seem surprising that the worms do not react to fermented feedstock, but apparently it's not a problem.

Others put Bokashi pre-compost into their regular composting pile. In gardens, one must remember not to plant anything where the Bokashi was buried for at least two weeks. Burying it in the compost pile eliminates this need. It also solves the problem of finding fallow space in small gardens. While it might seem pointless to use the Bokashi method if you're just going to throw the stuff on the compost heap anyway, this objection misses an important point: while the material that goes into a Bokashi bin would take months to compost in an outdoor pile, the pre-compost breaks down completely in about a month.

The acidic nature of Bokashi means that one should keep an eye on the pH of the pile, especially if one is adding Bokashi frequently.

<https://www.planetnatural.com/composter-connection/indoor-composting/bokashi-composting/>

To Do

Bring bags of bokashi

Print out handout

Print out samples of compost signs

Print out one copy of compost activities

Print out FAQ for Whole Foods

Print out copy of grant

Print out copy of boilerplate

Bag donations from Whole Foods