



## Compost mentors newsletter

Autumn 2010

### Well done mentors!

Congratulations to the 10 mentors who volunteered for over 20 hours and were rewarded with Tamar Organics vouchers! And well done to those who are almost there... quite a few of you have done just under 20 hours, so do those few extra hours this autumn and receive your £5 voucher! Most of you have been doing really well in the last few months, which is great. Thank you for your hard work. And don't forget to send your volunteering hours log sheets to us to make your work count and get a chance to receive your prize.



*Jenny and Joan from the Falmouth mentors group*

### Mentors wanted in the Newquay area

We are now looking for mentors in and around Newquay, so if you know anyone from this area who may be interested, please let them know about the scheme! The Newquay workshop will be on Thursday 4 November, 7pm to 9:30 pm.

## Time to make leaf mould

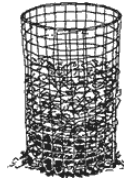
Do not let leaves go to waste! You can make high quality compost and mulch using fallen leaves. Here's how:

### 1. Prepare the container you will put the leaves in. You could use:

- A bin bag with holes in to provide aeration



- A piece of wire mesh bent over and tied together in a circular shape.



### 2. Collect autumn leaves.

### 3. Put them in your container, add a little water if they are very dry.

### 4. Leave them to decompose for a year or two.

**You can use partially rotten leaves as mulch after a year, or you can leave it to become well-rotted and finer and use as part of a sowing mix or potting compost.**

#### Tips:

- Do not be too tidy and rake all your leaves: leave carpets of leaves here and there to provide a shelter for wildlife.
- Do not use evergreen leaves such as holly, laurel or Leyland cypress and other conifers.

## Autumn to do's

The air is crisp, the trees golden under the rays of the gentle autumn sun: it's lovely to spend time outside in the autumn. And while you are out enjoying the season, why don't you:

- Add garden waste to your compost bin: fallen leaves, cuttings, spent annuals... Autumn is a great time to feed your bin!
- Insulate your wormery. (Using bubble wrap, cardboard, an old blanket...)
- Harvest leftover seeds from spent crops. (But leave some seed heads to overwinter to provide food for birds)
- Sow a green manure (like field beans or grazing rye) on your vegetable plot or mulch with cardboard.
- If you don't have a vegetable plot yet but have some space, why don't you plan one now and start digging before the first frosts?
- Plant bare-root and balled shrubs and trees, and herbaceous perennials.
- Ensure your bird feeders are well stocked.



## Things to sow and plant

Here are a few suggestions of things to grow in the autumn:

- Garlic
- Onions
- Rocket
- Oriental leaves (mizuna, mibuna, oriental mustard leaf, pak choi, red amaranthe...)
- American land cress
- Winter lettuce
- Lamb's lettuce (also called corn salad)
- Hardy broad beans and peas
- Spring cabbages

**Happy gardening!**



## How to discourage rats from moving into your compost bin

It is getting colder, and your local ratties might be looking for a warm place to make a nest – if you do not want your gently simmering, cosy compost bin to become a rat's winter residence, here are a few tips:

- If you have not put wire mesh under your bin, now is time
- Or you could get a "converter base" to attach under your bin. Cheap ones are available here: [www.cornwall.getcomposting.com](http://www.cornwall.getcomposting.com)
- Rats prefer bins that are dry and undisturbed. So keeping your compost moist and giving it a stir every now and then will make it less attractive. (You can also regularly kick your bin if you are so inclined)
- Remember to keep meat/fish, greasy and dairy products out of your bin.
- If you notice that rats are trying to gnaw into your bin reinforce all sides, top and bottom with wire mesh.

## Take part in a nature survey

**Play your part in nature's recovery in Cornwall. Can you contribute to the Government's White Paper on the Natural Environment by Saturday 30th October 2010?**

In the build up to the 2010 General Election, The Wildlife Trusts called on the next Government to introduce a White Paper on Nature to identify the policy changes needed to restore our natural environment.

The Wildlife Trusts are delighted that in response to these calls, the Coalition Government will produce a White Paper on the Natural Environment in Spring 2011. To start the process they are first asking the public to share their views on nature and are seeking input by 30th October 2010 via a four question survey.

- You can take the survey here (it is very short, only 4 quick questions!): <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nature-of-england>

- And if you would like to read more about this, follow this link to the Cornwall Wildlife Trust website: <http://tiny.cc/fc23o>  
Or follow this link to the Defra website: <http://tiny.cc/xjsqu>

Source: Cornwall Wildlife Trust



## Good news on the sustainable waste management front: human poo turned into power for first time

### British homes used renewable gas made from human poo for the first time in October 2010

A coalition of businesses are claiming a UK first now that biomethane gas from the Didcot sewage works in Oxfordshire is producing enough renewable gas to supply up to 200 homes. The project, a joint venture between Thames Water, British Gas and Scotia Gas Networks, transforms sludge - the solid part of sewage - through anaerobic digestion into biogas.

According to a study by National Grid, it could account for at least 15% of the domestic gas market by 2020.

Energy and climate change secretary, Chris Huhne, said: "It's not every day that a Secretary of State can announce that, for the first time ever in the UK, people can cook and heat their homes with gas generated from sewage. This is an historic day for the companies involved, for energy from waste technologies, and for progress to increase the amount of renewable energy in the UK. I know there are other similar projects across the country that are close to completion, so this is just the start of a new era of renewable energy."

Chief executive of Thames Water, Martin Baggs, said: "We already produce £15m a year of electricity by burning biogas from the 2.8bn litres a day of sewage produced by our 14m customers. Feeding this renewable gas directly into the gas grid is the logical next step in our 'energy from waste' business.

What we have jointly achieved at Didcot is a sign of what is to come, which can be replicated across our network and indeed the whole country. Every sewage works in Britain is a potential source of local renewable gas waiting to be put to use."

Source: edie newsroom: <http://www.edie.net/news/>



## Discounted Green Johannas still available

Green Johannas are still available to Cornish residents at a discounted price of £25 (instead of £100), including a free caddy. The bins will be available to collect at the following outlets:

- **SOFA** in Redruth: <http://www.sofawestcornwall.org.uk/findus.htm>  
Unit C3, Pool Business Park, Dudnance Lane, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall. TR15 3QW; Tel: 01209 719733
- **Cornwall Scrap Store** in St Austell: <http://www.cornwallscrapstore.co.uk/locations.php>  
Goonmarris, St Austell, PL26 7QX; 01726 821161  
Open 10am to 5pm - Wednesday and Thursday
- **Re:source** in Bodmin: <http://www.myresource.org.uk/contact-us.html> Bodmin Business Park, Launceston Road, Bodmin, PL31 2RJ; 0800 321 3356

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Cornwall Waste Action  
63 West End  
Redruth TR15 2SQ  
Cornwall

t: 01209 210883  
w: [www.wasteaction.org.uk](http://www.wasteaction.org.uk)

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