

Lions Clubs International District 410E

Environment Newsletter

Who am I?

I'm not an environmental activist. I'm not an expert on sustainability. I don't recycle. I'm not a vegan. I have no idea what my carbon footprint is.... not yet anyway. This year is the start of my journey...

I am a person living in the real world. I believe that we should make it a better place. I like the idea of being less dependent on electricity. One day I'd like to live "off the grid", like my son, and give back as much as I take from the water, earth and air.

But for now, this is me being curious, and sharing what I find interesting about the environment, sustainability, conservation and a better, healthier life for myself, this planet, and the coming generations.

What we do

We may not have some of the sophisticated initiatives or infrastructure BUT we think that a lot of Lions, South Africans, try where they can to do better. From using less plastic, bringing their own bags, using less water, making do or repurposing, a trend that is on the upswing.

Social media feeds are scattered with people posting their thoughts on straws, plastic waste, people asking which butchers allow you to take your own containers so as to skip the polystyrene and cling – wrapped meat and the joy that Pick n Pay now sells reusable bags for fruits and veg. If you're reading this, no doubt you're one of those fabulous forward thinkers and to keep you on the right track I've put together some of my favourite green-minded initiatives.



Inside this issue

Special points of interest

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- What we do
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- Make your own compost
- Beautiful rich soil
- Remember environment day 30th May

Grow your own vegetables



Why not make your own compost...

1. Start with a compost bin

Buy one from a garden centre or make your own. Try upcycling previously used items such as plastic storage tubs, wooden pallets, or even plastic garbage cans.

Placing your bins near or next to the garden optimises efficiency and ease. Make sure to monitor your compost heap regularly, especially during periods of warmer weather.

2. Green and brown layers

A mix of fresh green garden waste and dry, brown matter for your compost bin makes for a healthy compost heap. Browns are the carbon-rich energy sources that include things like dead leaves, newspaper, dead branches and cardboard. Greens are the nitrogen-rich sources needed for growth in healthy compost. They are materials like non-dairy/meat food scraps, grass clippings and pulled weeds.

Start by creating an initial base layer of woody garden refuse made up of sticks or branches to help create airflow within the compost bin. Then begin layering green and brown matter whenever possible.

After the base layer, add a layer of browns and make sure it is higher on the sides than the middle. Inside of this "bowl" of browns, place a thin layer of greens. Cover the greens with another layer of browns so no greens are visible and repeat until you've used all of your materials. Ensure that all greens are covered with browns to prevent pests from becoming interested in your efforts. Continue layering browns and greens until your bin is full.

3. Try using more than just green and brown

Compost eggshells, paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, paper bags and torn-up cotton clothing. Expand your resource inventory and think beyond green and brown, but remember to add these items in moderation. **EcoPack**'s range of biodegradable and compostable packaging is great for re-purposing single-use items such as our coffee cups, disposable plates or bowls, and take-away containers. Check the fine print of your products, as each item has different instructions for composting.

4. Add Water

A light watering of your compost heap will help it decompose more quickly. Aim for damp, not soaked. Putting a lid on to help your compost retain water.

5. Add Air

One of the reasons for stinky compost bins is a lack of proper airflow. Your compost is a living, breathing organism that needs air just as much as we do. If your compost becomes anaerobic, meaning that there is no oxygen present, it may be harmful to your garden. When organic material breaks down in the presence of oxygen, the primary by-products are water, heat and carbon dioxide. But anaerobic decay produces methane, which is a far more potent greenhouse gas.

Turn compost regularly (at least every couple of weeks) with a pitchfork or shovel to help speed up the process of composting, as well as to ensure that your compost bin allows air to enter.

6. Harvesting your compost

When the bottom of the bin looks and smells like rich, crumbly earth and no food scraps are present, you're ready to use your compost for your garden or house plants. To fertilize your garden, just add a 3 – 6cm layer of compost to your pot plants or grass, and then rake it to evenly distribute it. Over a period of time, rainwater will push the compost into the soil, feeding your plants and lawn in the process.

After harvesting, keep adding layers of browns and greens, and you'll have yourself a fully functioning compost system for your home.

Beautiful rich soil to plant your pot plants, vegetables and even Spekboom trees in the garden or in pots



It's simple to start and easy to maintain and can be done both outdoors and/or indoors. Figuring out your needs for composting within your available space will help you determine which one will work best for you.

Most of us are just trying to reduce waste in ways that average people are not doing at this current moment.

Every time you learn a new tip, a new way to reuse, or successfully completed a sustainable task, it brings you one step closer to our common goal of protecting our environment.



Remember environment day 30 May..

