

Compost, Grease Recycling, and Food Waste: Turning Garbage Into Gold



Five ways to reduce Rhode Island's methane emissions and landfill land grabs



- Compost in your yard, or even driveway, if you have the space
- Check if a local restaurant will take your used cooking oil to recycle
- Work with a neighborhood association and/or community garden to set up a compost dropoff
- Ask your workplace to install a composting bin and contract for pickup
- Organize a letter-writing campaign or petition to ask your Town Manager for compost collection bins, to go with your trash and recycling bins, and for a cooking-oil drop-off point

Rhode Island's central landfill will reach its capacity in 2038 if we continue throwing away food waste, and food scraps that end up in landfill produce the powerful greenhouse gas methane. Composting food scraps and yard waste reduces methane production and the land used for landfills.

Household action: The basics of home composting: add vegetable matter only (vegetable food scraps, grass clippings, raked leaves), use a ventilated bin with a fitted cover if you live in the city so rats don't get in, and turn it over every so often with a shovel or gardening fork. When it looks like dirt, it is dirt, and you can use it in flowerpots or on your garden beds. See the "Further Resources" section online for more detailed guides.

Composting also reduces the fossil fuel and monetary cost of shipping food scraps and yard waste to the landfill, provides a vital resource to community agriculture, can be used to create jobs through composting businesses and increased support for farming, and helps increase the power of soils to store heat-trapping carbon. Recycling cooking oil/grease as biodiesel offers a fossil fuel replacement whose overall production creates fewer greenhouse gases. There are companies in Rhode Island that will collect both of these forms of "waste" and turn them into something useful.

Community action: Work with a neighborhood association or community organization to set up a compost drop-off, and make an arrangement with a community garden or with a composting business to collect and use it. Some farmers' markets [<http://farmfreshri.org/>] also have compost drop-offs. Join with coworkers, other parents, board members, etc. to propose the addition of a compost bin to your business or your children's school.