

Hello Composters!

March Composting Tip:

The temperature is heating up but we still aren't getting a whole lot of rain. This means your compost and your gardens are probably going to require more water. They really prefer rain water. Consider installing a rain barrel or two to catch the rain water. If you don't have a rain barrel, placing a few 5 gallon buckets under the eaves is better than nothing. (It's perfectly legal - the Extension Office offers classes.)

To tell if your compost is at the correct moisture level, do the *"SQUEEZE TEST"*. Simply grab a handful of your compost (not any visible food waste preferably). Squeeze it. If it clumps together like play doh, it's at the correct moisture level. If it falls apart, it's too dry and if water squeezes out between your fingers, it's too wet. It should be about the consistency of a damp sponge.

This compost is too dry. If yours is also too dry, turn it and add water. You will be surprised at how much water it really needs! If your compost is too wet. turn it and add more carbon to soak up the excess liquid.



Upcoming Events:

We will be at the **Sustainable Living Conference** at All World Acres in Plant City. PCCA is scheduled to present at 8am Friday March 15th on setting up and managing a community compost hub, and again at 2pm for a composting class for children. You can buy tickets for the whole 4-day event or just a day or weekend pass. It's family friendly and so much fun. Check it out!

[Tickets Here](#)

The **Grow Community Gardens Conference** is on April 6th in Tampa. We will be talking about how compost can help your community or school garden grow both plants and a strong network within the community.

[Tickets Here](#)

Other events can be found on our [calendar](#).

International Composting Awareness Week is coming up in **May**. Stay tuned!

How to Make More Compost:

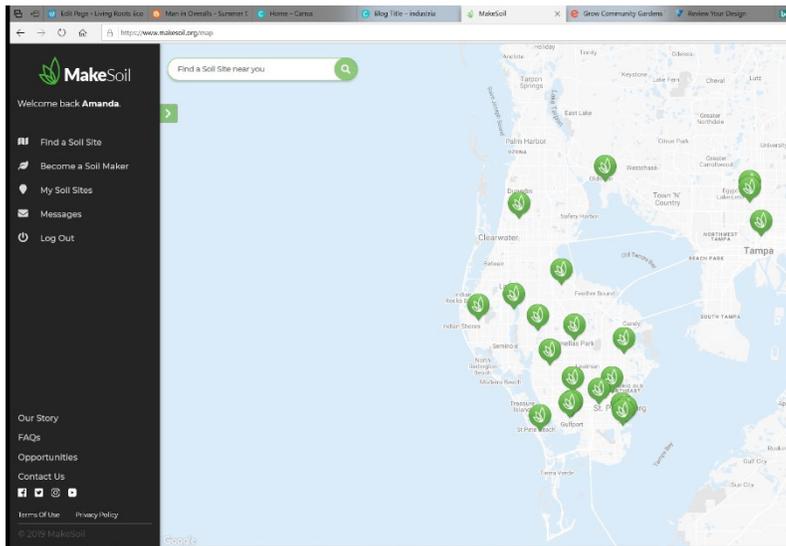
Every gardener wants maximum production for the least amount of work. Whether you grow an edible garden, tropical gardens or a lush green lawn, your landscape and gardens will benefit from compost. It adds healthy microbial life and nutrients for a strong root system. It's expensive to buy, heavy to haul and comes in plastic bags. Why go through all that when you can make enough for all of your needs.

Here's two ways to make more compost:

1. Develop a relationship with a local produce market, coffee shop, restaurant or store and ask for their coffee grounds, fruit and veggie food scraps, and juice pulp. You'll probably have to provide a container and follow their wishes for pick-up. If you choose to do this, be consistent. Don't leave them hanging because that may leave them with an unfavorable view of composting.
2. Establish a community compost drop off site at your home, community garden, school or business. Ask friends and neighbors to contribute by bringing their food scraps to you.

A few tips to get you started:

Make sure that you have the capacity to handle the additional food scraps. You can start small with one or two neighbors contributing and grow as you feel comfortable.	Gather enough carbon to last a few weeks before you get started. Then get a little bit more. You definitely don't want to have a big load of food scraps delivered to your house and not have enough carbon (leaves, wood chips, shredded paper or cardboard).
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If you're not sure how to manage a community compost site, message us at CompostingAlliance@gmail.com and we can help you!

Sign up on MakeSoil.org to communicate with your Soil Supporters! Let's turn Pinellas County **GREEN!**

How Do You Use Your Compost?

In addition to these annual vegetables, you can plant longevity spinach, katuk, moringa, Okinawa spinach, malabar spinach, fruit trees, tindora, most culinary herbs and more! What are you growing? We want to see your garden pics. Post 'em on our Facebook page or group!

EDIBLES TO PLANT IN MARCH

	North	Central	South
Survives Transplanting	Arugula, Eggplant, Kohlrabi, Pepper, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes	Arugula, Chinese Cabbage, Kohlrabi, Pepper, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard	Arugula, Chinese Cabbage, Endive/Escarole, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard
Transplant With Care	Carrots, Spinach	Carrots, Celery, Spinach	Carrots, Celery
Use Seeds	Beans (bush, pole, lima), Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onion (bunching, shallot), Peas (English, southern), Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Watermelon	Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupes, Corn, Cucumbers, Okra, Onion (bunching, shallot), Peas (southern), Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Watermelon	Beans (bush, pole, lima), Cantaloupes, Corn, Okra, Onion (bunching, shallot), Peas (southern), Radish, Squash (summer, winter), Watermelon





For more information, please visit GardeningSolutions.ifas.ufl.edu

Happy composting!!!

Amanda, Heather, and Jen