

THE LATEST DIRT

Fall 2014

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMPOST EDUCATION CENTRE

Have fun with fungi this fall!

There's no need to be in the dark about growing mushrooms! These tasty wonders of the food world are filled with vitamins, antioxidants, and other essential nutrients, plus they're fun and easy to grow. The keys to growing mushrooms at home are establishing the right growing conditions and acquiring or making mushroom spawn, which is the material used to propagate mushrooms.

Learn about mushrooms' healthful attributes and how easy it is to grow them in your home or backyard at the Compost Education Centre's **Mushroom Open House on Saturday November 8th from 10am-2pm**. We'll be offering a free introductory workshop on mushroom companions in the garden from 10am-11am as well as an affordable 'Grow Your Own Mushrooms At Home' workshop from 2-4pm. Both will be taught by our knowledgeable local expert [Danielle Stevenson of D.I.Y. Fungi](#). Throughout the open house, there will be edible mushroom experts on hand to answer all your questions about fabulous fungi!

[FREE: Mushroom Companions to the Garden or Farm 10:00-11:00am](#)

This free workshop highlights three super garden companions- King Stropharia, Elm Oyster and Shaggy Mane. We will learn how to make a mushroom bed, mushroom pathways, and companion plant within veggie beds. We'll also talk about the role of magical Mycorrhizal fungi in the garden and orchard.

[Grow Your Own Mushrooms At Home! 2:00-4:00pm](#)

Cost: \$20 / Members \$15

In this 2-hour workshop, participants will get hands-on with simple, low-tech methods for growing Oyster mushrooms organically at home or in your apartment. Each participant will make their own one gallon bucket Oyster mushroom kit to take home too!

Register for workshops at www.composteducation.eventbrite.ca



**DONATE
NOW**

Your support allows us to keep offering affordable community education to children and adults! Simply click the button to the left to donate now or visit our website and click the Canada Helps link under "Donations" on the main menu bar. **Thank you so much!**

Upcoming Workshops

| Date | Workshop | Time | Cost |
|--------|---|-------------|--|
| Nov 15 | Composting Basics Learn all the basics of composting and discover which system is right for you! | 10am - 12pm | FREE (must register) Register here! |
| Nov 15 | INTENSIVE: Mushroom Pathways By using wood chips as a medium for pathways we can extend our range and diversity of growing space with the addition of mushroom culture! Dug out wood chip pathways hold water (rain and/or irrigation) and allow it to slow, spread, and sink so that nearby plants can access it in times of need. | 10am - 12pm | \$25 (Members \$20) Register here! |
| Nov 22 | Plant Propagation This workshop looks at different techniques to help you grow the plants you always wanted without having to buy them. We will learn about hardwood and softwood cuttings, layering, air layering, division and grafting. | 2pm - 4pm | \$20 (Members \$15) Register here! |

Straw Bale Classroom Upgrade

Our straw bale classroom received a face-lift at the beginning of the fall season! We chose a cozy, glowing yellow ochre colour and replaced the lighting to create a warm and welcoming environment. The paint is a special non-toxic, silica based mineral coat that prevents the straw inside the classroom walls from soaking up moisture. It is a much more permanent solution to protecting the straw bale walls than a lime plaster and we look forward to it being with us for many years to come. We hope you'll enjoy being in this wonderful new space as you soak up all the great info our workshops have to offer!



Boulevard Gardening

“Isn’t it illegal?” “I heard you’ll get fined.” “We would love to grow food on our boulevard, but won’t the City remove it?”

So starts the article that our Site Manager, Alysha Punnett, wrote for October’s Village Vibe on the recent developments concerning boulevard gardening in the City of Gardens (to read the full article, click [here](#)). We are so pleased to have been involved in the process to get the Interim Boulevard Gardening Guidelines passed through council and onto the City's [website](#)!



Our

role: The Compost Education Centre will be playing a "match-making" role between folks who need a space to garden and boulevard gardens that need someone to maintain them. The CEC taking on this role removed a major barrier to the guidelines being passed, and we’re excited to pair up gardens who need gardeners! If you want to be placed on a list of potential gardeners, or have a boulevard garden that you need help with, please e-mail your **location** and **contact information** to vicboulevardgardens@gmail.com.

Huge thanks to Mike Large and his team of supporters for drafting the guidelines and working to make this happen! Check out Mike's website [StreetGreens](#) to learn more

about three beautiful boulevard gardens already happening in Victoria!

Fall Gardening Tip

It’s mulching time once again, and Alysha is hard at it in the gardens here at the Centre. Below is our Forest Garden with its winter blanket. Remember to weed the area you’re mulching first, then lay down your material for protecting the soil from eroding winter rains and wind. Here, a layer of alpaca manure was put down as a nutrient and microbe layer, then topped with straw for insulation. Check out those fancy new colours on the bee hotel too!





Welcome Emily!

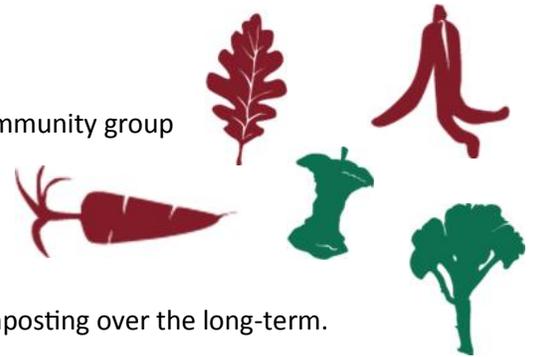
Our new outreach coordinator is Emily Bellinger, who some of you may have already met as our most recent site intern. She spent the summer whipping the gardens into shape, running fantastic site tours for visiting kids, holding down the fort in the office (in the Dr. Wiggles costume, if we were lucky) and generally being an incredible asset to the Centre. She is excited about her new position and is looking forward to representing us at community events and getting more chances to spend time with our wonderful volunteers and customers.

Subsidized Composting Supplies for Community Groups

We are pleased to offer a new program to make composting more accessible for community groups! For **\$45, plus the cost of subsidized composting supplies**, your group receives a composting workshop, access to subsidized composting supplies, educational materials, and follow-up composting support.

To be eligible for this program, your group must:

- Be a registered charity, a non-profit, a cooperative, a community centre, or community group
- (for e.g. a church group, boys and girls club, neighbourhood association, etc.);
- Have a minimum of 5 members;
- Have been in existence for at least one year;
- Be located within the Capital Regional District.
- Have demonstrated interest, human resources and dedication to continue composting over the long-term.



If your group meets these criteria, get in touch with us at education@compost.bc.ca or 250-386-9676 to request an application form. Once your application has been accepted, you can purchase composters at the following prices:

| Supplies | Retail Price | Subsidized Price |
|---|--------------|------------------|
| Earth Machine (<i>backyard composter</i>) | \$89.95 | \$35.00 |
| Green Cone Food Digester (<i>for those hard-to-compost items</i>) | \$165.00 | \$35.00 |
| Worm Bin with worms (<i>for composting indoors</i>) | \$49.95 | \$25.00 |



1216 North Park Street
(at Chambers)
Victoria BC V8T 1C9

Hours of Operation
Wed. - Sat. 10am to 4pm

250-386-9676
www.compost.bc.ca

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