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Lamorinda Home Composting: A Diverse and Growing Practice

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*Wendy Scheck chips yard clippings while her husband, Andy, turns the compost.
Photo Jaya Griggs*

"For the compost process to happen, you need heat and you need moisture," says Paykel, adding that the CCCSWA workshop he attended last year taught him all he needed to know. For him the challenge was ants, and what he found was that the little critters were taking over the pile when it was too dry. Scheck had a problem that no one would want: rats. "Since I put wooden compost boxes on concrete pavers, I have had no more problems," he says. None of the people reported any unpleasant smell coming out of the pile.

"Yard and food waste represent 30 percent of the waste stream; we encourage people to compost to reduce the volume of what has to be hauled away," says CCCSWA Ashley Louisiana. On the authority's website residents can purchase bins at a reduced price and check out the dates of free upcoming workshops. In order to get certified, residents need to either have purchased a bin from CCCSWA or send pictures of their practice.

"This is an Honor system," adds Louisiana.

The Skinny About Composting

A balance of browns (fallen leaves, straw, wood chips) and greens (grass clippings and food scraps) is all you need to make compost. Compost needs heat and moisture. Composting containers vary from a simple pile on the ground, to a series of bins that can be made of different wood or plastic. The next compost workshop in Lamorinda is scheduled for Saturday, June 7 in the Lafayette Community Garden. For more information, go to wastediversion.org.

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