

Composting



The case for compost

Compost makes your garden grow

- ◆ It feeds plants
- ◆ Helps control diseases
- ◆ Lightens heavy soils
- ◆ Makes lighter soils hold more water

Composting helps reduce pollution

- ◆ Composting reduces volume of waste going to landfill (30% of Shropshire's domestic waste is compostable)
- ◆ Biodegradable waste in landfill sites gets trapped in airless pockets causing it to produce methane, a major greenhouse gas

Composting saves wildlife

- ◆ Most of the multi-purpose compost currently for sale contains a high proportion of peat. Little surprise that 94% of the UK's peat bogs have been destroyed or damaged. Peat lands around the world are now under threat of extraction.
- ◆ Wildlife loves compost heaps. Excellent for invertebrates and birds that eat them.

Composting saves money

It costs you and me £9,000,000 to dispose of Shropshire's waste each year.

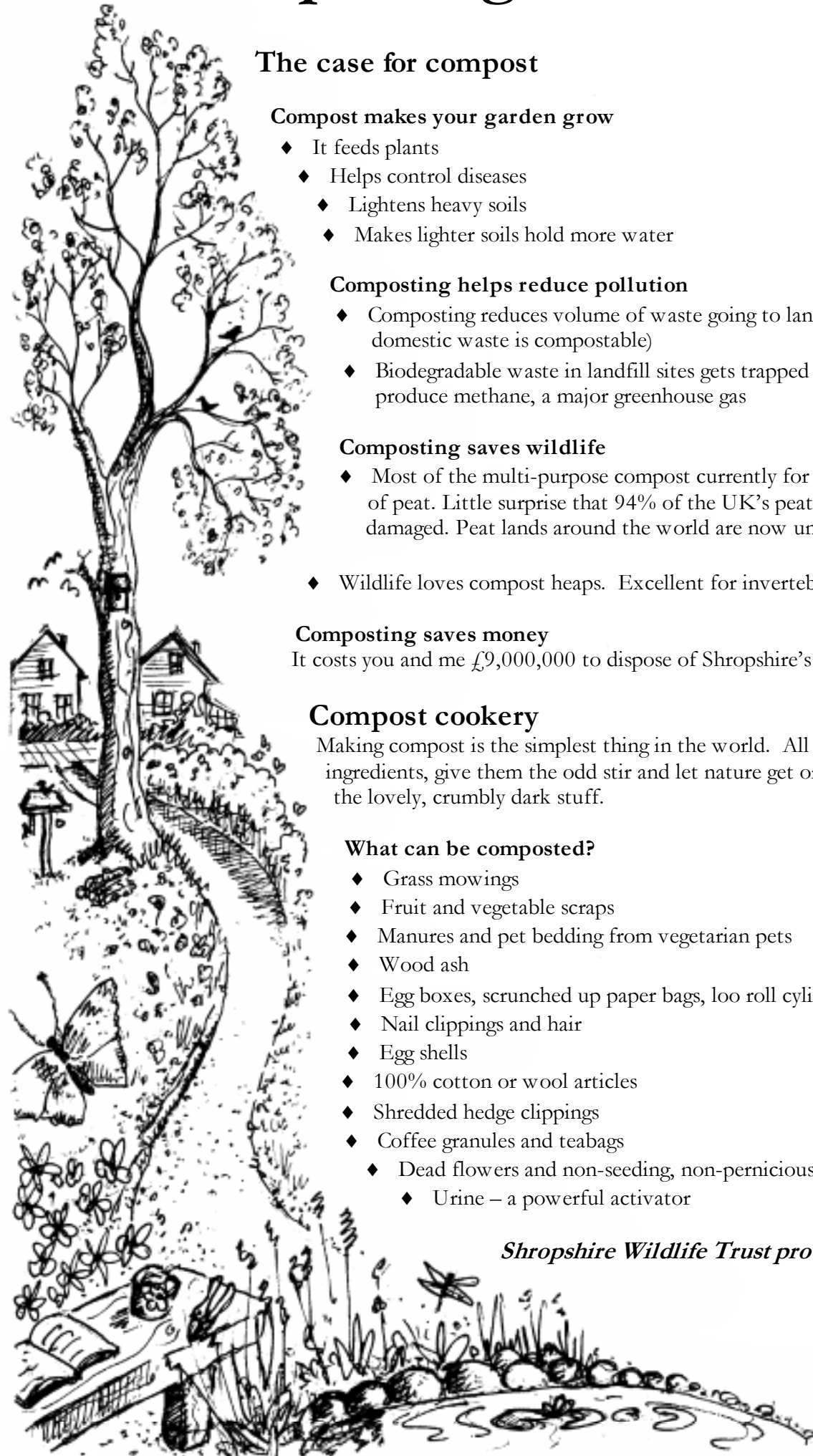
Compost cookery

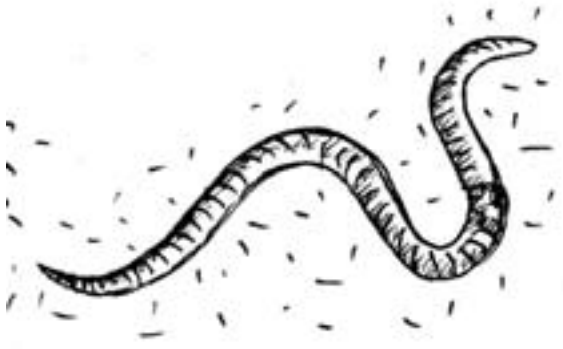
Making compost is the simplest thing in the world. All you have to do is supply the ingredients, give them the odd stir and let nature get on with the job of turning it into the lovely, crumbly dark stuff.

What can be composted?

- ◆ Grass mowings
- ◆ Fruit and vegetable scraps
- ◆ Manures and pet bedding from vegetarian pets
- ◆ Wood ash
- ◆ Egg boxes, scrunched up paper bags, loo roll cylinders and kitchen roll paper
- ◆ Nail clippings and hair
- ◆ Egg shells
- ◆ 100% cotton or wool articles
- ◆ Shredded hedge clippings
- ◆ Coffee granules and teabags
- ◆ Dead flowers and non-seeding, non-pernicious weeds
 - ◆ Urine – a powerful activator

Shropshire Wildlife Trust protects wildlife where you live





Do not compost

- ◆ Dog or cat faeces or manures from other meat-eating animals
- ◆ Coal ash
- ◆ Newspapers and magazines – recycle them instead
- ◆ Persistent and pernicious weeds such as ground elder, couch grass or bindweed
- ◆ Meat, egg or cheese leftovers

What to make your compost in

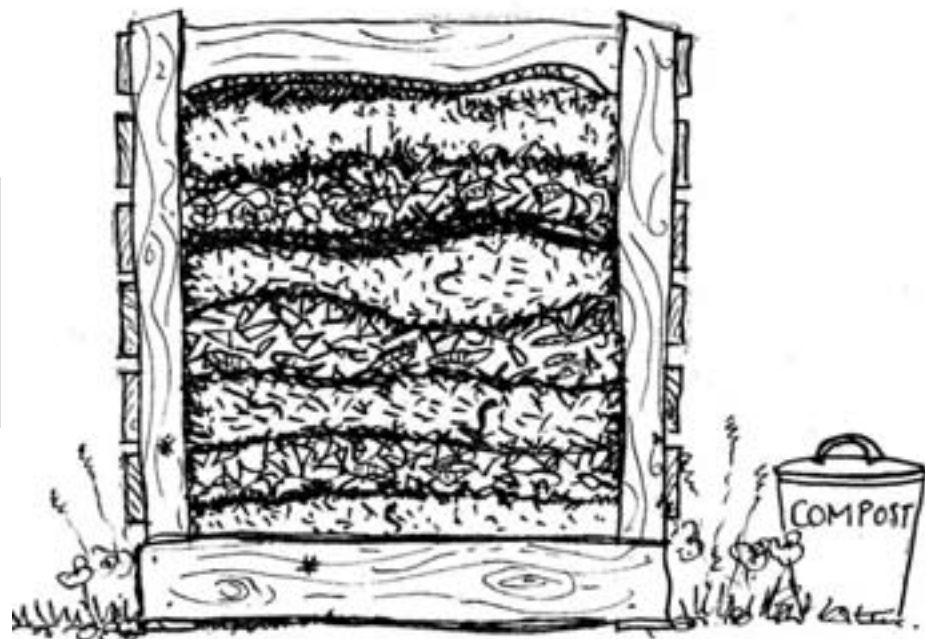
- ◆ There is a wide range of compost bins on the market to suit different situations. The traditional New Zealand wooden box is the old favourite, but many people find plastic bins convenient and efficient.
- ◆ Ideally the bin should be sited somewhere sunny so it heats up fast but this is not essential.
- ◆ Two heaps are useful so that one lot can mature as the next begins the composting process. If you have a bin you can empty it out in the corner of your garden and leave the half-cooked compost to mature.
- ◆ Keep a bucket with a lid under the kitchen sink where you can throw your kitchen waste.

Secrets of successful composting

- ◆ Provide plenty of roughage. Old flower stalks, paper, a few wood shavings and straw provide the fibre your heap needs to stop the grass mowings, kitchen scraps and other sappy materials rotting into slimy, smelly gunge.
- ◆ Air is the invisible, vital ingredient in your heap. The roughage above will help keep your compost oxygenated. Mix other ingredients well before adding. Stirring your heap once or twice is helpful in the early stages.

Composting to suit you

Some people are zealous about composting, firing up their heaps in days, turning them over and producing gorgeous compost in a couple of months. But you don't have to be a fanatic or an expert to produce compost. Just mix your ingredients, leave them to rot, let nature take over at a slower pace and you will still be rewarded with compost in time. It might take a year or two but the compost miracle will definitely happen.



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