

Giving Back to the Earth by Composting

“We should give back to the Earth what we take out of it,” explains Deb Walker of Wright Way Natural Farm located just northeast of Clam River. “Composting is one way to give back, and it’s an important way.”



Composting is nature’s way of breaking down biodegradable materials to form a rich soil used by gardeners and small farmers. A visit to Walker’s farm features many compost piles on tarps ready to be spread into the soil during planting. “This helps to create a natural fertilizer as well as a balance in the soil needed to grow vegetables here at the farm,” she says.

Walker says the farm composts anything and everything, including biodegradable parts of chickens raised at the farm. The small farm located along Wright Road grows tomatoes, potatoes, beets, squash, many other vegetables, and popcorn. Once the plants have been harvested they are then pulled and brought to compost bins created out of posts and wire. Red worms are also used to break down these materials and accelerate the process.

The result is a rich, dark soil some call “black gold” because of its power to enrich existing soils. Composting also keeps all of these materials out of the solid waste stream, which is transported to local landfills. Walker says, “Anyone can do this. It’s very simple to set up a composting area, and a wide variety of composters can be ordered on the internet. They are very inexpensive, and it’s easy to do.”

Wright Way Natural Farm provides vegetables to subscribers through a program called Community Supported Agriculture. Around 30 families receive their vegetables from this farm through the growing season. “You are what you eat,” Walker emphasizes. “Locally grown vegetables always taste better and consume much less energy than vegetables sold in supermarkets.” Walker says leaves also make great compost, along with shredded paper, grass clippings and coffee grounds. “The living organisms in compost help give back to the “Earth. More and more small farmers are using the composting process.”

Wright Way Natural Farm is also going green, using wind generators and other energy conservation measures. Walker hopes to soon produce all the energy needed for the farm and her home through these methods and turn off the utility grid.

With water quality and land stewardship being top priorities throughout the Chain of Lakes region, composting is one of the easiest and most simple things residents can do to make a huge difference. It is an easy way to recycle without even leaving home.