

THE GARDEN BUGLE

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OUR NEW COMPOST BIN, AND YAY TO DECAY

Summer does not always age gracefully. As our warm weather plants near the end of their lives, vibrant green leaves become dull. Fruits rot before they ripen; stems turn brown and waxy; decomposers, like pillbugs and earthworms, appear in droves.

The end of a plant's life, however, marks the beginning of the compost cycle. When a plant dies, tiny organisms called decomposers either physically or chemically break it down and release the plant's nutrients back into the soil. Future generations of plants absorb these nutrients through their roots, and the cycle continues. When people take charge of the decom-

position process, we call it composting.

Our neighbors at Earth Matter are the best composters we know, and for years they have been teaching us about the benefits of compost-rich soil. Adding finished compost, or humus, to soil can help improve texture, structure, and add nutrients essential to plant growth. Plus, we get very, very excited about the little critters living in our compost.

Last month, GrowNYC's Teaching Garden team gathered beneath one of our oak trees to build a simple, but



sturdy, three-bin system. We are excited to have a new teaching tool to share with classes.

If you are interested in building a compost bin of your own, or simply want to learn more about compost process, NYC Compost Project has some [very good resources](#).

DANA'S DISH ON DIRT

While the fall equinox just passed, and nights grow ever-longer, it's not too late to plant a few crops before first frost. Look for crops that reach maturity in 30-40 days. Some delicious, direct-seed options include radishes, tender greens, and herbs like cilantro or dill.



October is also a great time

to start seeding your cover crop. At the Teaching Garden we use clover and rye to prevent soil erosion over the winter and restore nutrients to the soil. Birds love to eat cover crop seeds, so I recommend mixing your seeds with compost before sprinkling the mixture over

OCTOBER EVENTS

- "First Weekend" Volunteer Hours
Oct. 6/7, 1-3 PM
- Medicinal Herb Workshop
Oct. 13/14, 2 PM
- Harvest Festival
Oct 27/28



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

COMPOST BIN	1
DANA'S DISH	1
ASK EVE	2
SQUASH, ODE	2
RECIPE	2

GROWN NYC'S TEACHING GARDEN

GrowNYC's Governors Island Teaching Garden is a 21,000 square foot urban farm that aims to engage, excite, and educate its visitors in all aspects of urban farming. Field trips are available from April through November for NYC students (K-12), who have the opportunity to plant, water, harvest, and taste the garden's wide array of vegetables, herbs, and fruits.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!

@TEACHINGGARDENNYC



ASK EVE

Dear Eve,

Do I kill the tomato hornworm?

Troubled in Tribeca

Dear Troubled,

Although we want to love all of nature's creatures, we will be tomato-less if we leave this chubby caterpillar to its own devices. Unfortunately, the best thing to do in this scenario is kill the worm. Luckily there are a few options superior to squashing it under a garden shoe.

These worms are a tasty snack for chickens! I suggest feeding the hornworm to a local chicken. If you do not have a chicken, transfer the worm to a spot far away from your precious tomato plants and let nature take its course. Ideally another bird will spot it from above.

All the best,

Eve



Hornworm covered in parasitoid wasp larvae. These larvae eventually killed their horned host, then pollinated our garden in their adult lives. Wasps can be ordered online, or you can lure them with a suitable habitat.

AN ODE TO SQUASH

Though we miss summer's bright bursts of cherry tomatoes, and wax poetic about suyo cucumbers of yore, the garden team is ready for autumn. Colder weather stills the island, and it feels good to trade our clogs for goulashes.

Back in July, while eating our weight in zucchini, we snuck glances at the winter squash growing alongside: butternut, acorn, and (our crown jewel) kabocha. Gourd fanatics may associate these tough-rinded fruits with ice and snow, but really, winter squash is a warm-season vegetable. We planted our win-

ter squash in early July and began to harvest in late August.

Though visions of creamed soup danced through our heads, we did not immediately eat our harvest. Instead, we practiced zen-like patience and cured the squash for a few weeks. Ever wonder why some vegetables (like potatoes, onions, and squash) can last for months stuck in the back of a pantry? More likely than not, they've been cured.

Curing is simple, we store vegetables in a well-ventilated area at a controlled climate for a few

weeks. Veggies develop a hardened skin, after which they can be stored for many months in a cool, dark place. This is good news for us! Even in November, after all our crops have been pulled out of the ground, we will be able to make butternut squash soup in our bike-powered blender.

Bike Blender Squash Soup

Ingredients

- 1 butternut squash, cut into cubes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 sprig thyme, rosemary, and sage
- 1 inch ginger
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 cups vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper

Process

1. Toss butternut squash, onion, and garlic cloves in olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast at 400 degrees for 30 minutes, or until soft.
2. While squash roasts, simmer vegetable stock with herbs and ginger.
3. Add roasted veg to stock. Simmer until blendable. Transfer all ingredients to bike blender. Pedal until smooth.