Composting
How many of you compost already?
Outline of today’s presentation

- Why should you compost?
- What is composting and how does it work?
- How you can compost
- Troubleshooting your compost
Why should you compost?
Because we can do better.
Because with more waste, we need to build more and larger landfills.
Because in Florida, per person, we’ve placed 14.7 tons of trash into landfills.
And we know that waste in landfills emits greenhouse gasses, like methane.
The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land.

(Aldo Leopold)

Because we should.

“A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and the beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” – Aldo Leopold
Because we’re losing topsoil

• In the last 150 years, nearly half of the world’s most productive soil (topsoil) has disappeared
• In the US, soil on cropland is eroding 10 times faster than it can be replenished
• At this rate, the world could run out of topsoil in ~60 years (FAO).
Because it's fun and can build community.

- Composting really is fun, and it's best done with others
- Composting and soil building is part of a community's resilience
- One square meter of rich soil can harbor as many as 1 trillion organisms – building and respecting our biological community
What is composting?

Composting is the process of decomposing organic matter. It creates a closed cycle for some of our “waste” to return to the earth.
Mimicking Natural Systems
Humus, not hummus
WE COME FROM THE EARTH, WE RETURN TO THE EARTH, AND IN BETWEEN WE GARDEN
How does it work?
Raw organic matter is decomposed by bacteria, fungi, actinomycetes, algae, and other microfauna
Pallet Bin Composting

An Easy, cheap way to compost if you have a backyard
Anerobic Composting
Humanure

A FEW SIMPLE RULES

1. Don't pee unless making a deposit.
2. Cover deposit completely with sawdust... (2 or 3 scoops)
3. Sweep any stray sawdust into the toilet.
4. Smile? (You're saving the planet.)
What can I compost?
FOOD WASTE FOR COMPOST

GO FOR IT
- fruits
- vegetables, tops & bottoms
- rice & grains
- flowers
- cooked food without oil, dairy or meat
- eggshells
- tea bags
- coffee grounds

NO-NOS
- meat & fish
- bones
- dairy
- cooked food with oil, dairy & meat

Artwork by Julia Simon for NPR
Worms are picky eaters

Do not add garlic, onions, or acidic fruit (pineapples, mango) into a worm compost
"GREENS & BROWNS" COMPOSTING

GREENS
Think wet - Nitrogen rich
- fruits & vegetable scraps
- flowers
- coffee grounds
- fresh leaves
- egg shells
- fresh grass

BROWNS
Think dry - Carbon rich
- twigs & sticks
- dried grass
- egg cartons
- old leaves
- saw dust
- hay & straw
- dried pine needles

Artwork by Julia Simon for NPR
What if you can’t find enough browns?

- Take shredded paper home from the office (that’s what I do!)
- Learn when yard waste day is in your neighborhood or a more rural area
- Build partnerships and speak with your neighbors
- Speak with FPL if they’re in your area trimming trees, often they will give you the mulch if you ask for it
Turning your compost
Watering your compost

Keep your compost damp like a wrung out sponge
Compost Temperature
Sifting your finished compost
Community Composting
Troubleshooting Your Compost & Other Questions