



## Don't toss that tea bag!

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### Survey on Composting

What's your opinion on the compost bins at DLSPH?

Take this short online survey and let us know:

<http://tinyurl.com/cu77ze>

The Dalla Lana School of Public Health is participating in a pilot project at the University of Toronto involving organic waste recycling. Instead of placing your tea bag, tissue, or banana peel in the garbage bin, you can put it in the Green Bin!

*“There are large green bins located in the staff rooms, student lounge and on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor student area.”*

The DLSPH first offered Green Bin recycling in the Summer of 2008. There are large green bins located in the staff rooms, student lounge and on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor student area. Students, Faculty and Staff are encouraged to place compostable items into the bins. Common items that can be placed in the green bins include, tea bags, left over food

waste, and tissues and napkins. There are signs on the green bins, showing all compostable items.

The green bins are emptied twice a week.

There are also portable bins and bags available for meeting and event use. These bins can be borrowed, used during a meeting, and then emptied into the green bin at the conclusion of the meeting.

If you have any questions or suggestions related to the green bin program in the School please feel free to contact the green work group at [greening@sph.utoronto.ca](mailto:greening@sph.utoronto.ca).



“If it grows, it goes!”

Be sure to look for our next issue on Water, available in the Spring!



## Reusable Bottles for Sale!

Show your school pride and make a difference this year by purchasing a reusable water bottle with the NEW Dalla Lana logo on it! The DLSPH has 500 ml bottles available for only \$10.00. All proceeds from the sale of the bottles will be used to finance future green initiatives in the School. You can purchase the bottles from Stephanie do Rego ([stephanie.dorego@utoronto.ca](mailto:stephanie.dorego@utoronto.ca)), by either cash or cheque.

# Waste Feature

## Fate of Green Bin Waste

Did you ever wonder what happens to your organic waste after you place it at the curb for pick up? The waste is taken to the facility where all plastic bags are removed. Then the waste is turned into a liquid pulp to be processed by anaerobic digestion. The pulp and water are fed into a hydropulper which spins the organics and pulp to separate any plastic bags and unwanted materials. The pulp and water are then sent to a sealed tank called an anaerobic digester. This tank creates the necessary conditions for naturally occurring anaerobic bacteria to partially break down the organic materials. In approximately 20 days, the bacteria consume the liquid

pulp and convert it into digestate and biogas.

The digestate is an organic solid material, and biogas is a mixture of methane and carbon dioxide that can be converted into electricity and heat. Roughly 110 cubic metres of biogas is produced from one tonne of organic waste, this is equivalent to 670kwh of energy.

The digestate is taken to another facility where it is processed by aerobic composting. Aerobic composting, takes approximately six months and uses naturally occurring bacteria and fungi to break down organic material to produce compost. This process eliminates pathogens and produces a product that doesn't smell and can be used safely. The finished compost is given away to residents.

"composting, takes approximately six months"



## Zero Waste—A world without waste

The term *zero waste* is used to describe a whole system planning approach, emphasizing waste *prevention* over waste *management*. It's a design principle as well as a (long term) goal, as it involves changes at the production level. Generally, 75% of waste which ends up in landfills is products and packaging. In a *zero waste* system, incentives and regulations are adjusted to ensure that products are designed for longevity and reuse rather than obsolescence (sometimes called cradle-to-cradle rather than cradle-to-grave engineering). Further, waste is thought of as a potential resource, and 'mined' for reuse. Several municipalities and regions have already committed to zero waste approach and a strong movement pushing for zero waste has coalesced in Ontario (<http://envirolaw.com/2008/10/19/new-zero-waste-policy/>;

For more information:

[www.zerowaste.org](http://www.zerowaste.org)

[www.zwia.org](http://www.zwia.org)

[www.grrn.org/zerowaste](http://www.grrn.org/zerowaste)

## One Person's Difference

By Stephanie do Rego

According to Stats Canada, Canadians produced close to 1100 kilograms of waste per person in 2006. About 250lbs of that waste was diverted to recycling, while over 800 lbs ends up in landfill. This is a large amount of individual waste over the course of a year. After learning of this fact, I began to wonder what impact one person or one family could have on such an issue. I believe, if my family can make small adjustments in the way we live and work, we can make a difference. I have decided to share a few of the things that my family does to help decrease how much garbage we carry to the curb each week.

**We donate our used goods.** When we are finished with something, we make sure that we donate it to a charity that can use it. We are constantly donating toys, kids clothes and books, that we no longer need. One of the greatest things about these charities is that some will come to our house to pick up the goods, which is very convenient. (For a list of places to donate your used goods please see *De-Clutter and get rid of used goods*, on page four)

**We bring our own bag.** Plastic grocery bags are an item that is recyclable but nearly 95% still end up in the landfill often used as garbage bags. The city of Toronto has recently passed a by-law, that will be implemented later this year, requiring retail stores charge customers for single-use plastic bags. Some grocery stores already do this, charging five cents per bag. My local store actually provides me a rebate for each of our own bags that we use.

**Being a wise consumer is important to us.** Thinking twice about whether we really need the item and looking at the amount and type of packaging it comes in. Instead of purchasing individually-packaged snacks, why not buy a big bag and bring a plastic container full to work? I try to pay attention to where the packaging will eventually end up: landfill or the blue bin?

The actions of my family will not make international headlines nor will we save the polar ice caps. These actions will teach my children about the environment and conservation on the individual scale.



*Please think of the environment before you print this newsletter*

## The Controversy of Site 41

The county of North Simcoe, which encompasses Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny and Tay township, has been in the process of locating an appropriate landfill site since the late 1980s. This search has concluded that the particular area best suited for the new landfill is located approximately three miles north of Elmvale. It has been named Site 41. Since the announcement of the location for the site, a passionate debate has been waged between the municipality and those people that own land surrounding the site.



The residents' concern is contamination of the ground water. Hydrologists have measured impurities in the aquifer surrounding the site on the magnitude of parts per billion, leading some to claim the source as among the most pure in the world. Those living in the area are also hesitant to accept the construction of another landfill after a former site had been found to accept illegal chemical dumping which led to numerous health issues arising from its contamination of the water table. In order to emphasize the lack of

need for another site, local residents have initiated several reduction and recycling programs to minimize the amount of waste produced.

The value of the land owned by residents surrounding the dump is also certain to decrease.

Despite numerous attempts by concerned residents to stop the construction of dump Site 41, it is likely that the county will be going ahead. The county has guaranteed the performance of the containing liner, but residents are concerned that any potential damage to the water table and surrounding environment is difficult – if not impossible – to undo.

This is a story that is repeated in communities across the province. At the rate and scale we produce garbage, it has to go somewhere.



## Coffee Cup to Roofing Material?

In November 2008 Tim Hortons announced that they plan to set up recycling bins in their stores for paper, bottles and cans, as well as paper coffee cups and other waste the restaurant chain produces everyday. This decision was made public at the same time as the city of Toronto starts to crack down on food packaging that ends up in landfill. The coffee cups will be recycled into roofing material or cardboard boxes. The city of Toronto wants to move forward on a proposal requiring stores to give customers a 20-cent refund if they bring their own cup. But some businesses claim that giving a 20-cent refund would eat into their profits, and that 10-cents is more appropriate. Coffee shops will have until April to work out a compromise.

## One Simple Waste Thing Frequent Bulk Food Stores

Buy some of your food from bulk bins. Most supermarkets and health food stores offer bulk bins. You can purchase a wide variety of items, from candy, flour, rice, honey or cereal. When you purchase items in the bulk food aisle, there is less packaging and less waste because you can buy only what you need.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, packaging makes up more than 30% of all consumer waste. The Bulk Barn is Canada's largest bulk food retailer. They offer over 4000 products and pride themselves on quality and product freshness. There are 30 stores in the greater Toronto area. Visit [www.bulkbarnfoods.com](http://www.bulkbarnfoods.com) for more information.

## Food & Landfill— not good friends!

Most people think of food waste as a benign substance, and think that it rots away in the landfill anyway. However this is incorrect. In order for food waste to compost properly it requires light and air. Food in landfill is not exposed to either. Food that is in land fill is devoid of light and air, this produces methane gas, which contributes to global warming. Organic waste collection facilities have the correct systems in place (see *Organic Waste Process* article on page two) to ensure safe and efficient breakdown of waste.

Do you have a "green" themed event that you would like to share? Email it to [green-ing@sph.utoronto.ca](mailto:green-ing@sph.utoronto.ca) and we'll put it in the newsletter!

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## How to 'tip of the month:

### De-clutter and get rid of used goods

A short list of places to donate, sell or recycle your items is listed below. The Greening Workgroup would love to hear of other available agencies that will help in disposing and reusing household items.

Cell phones	University of Toronto Computerstore 214 College Street 416-978-7947
Printer cartridges	Staples <a href="http://www.staples.ca">www.staples.ca</a> Grand and Toy <a href="http://www.grandandtoy.ca">www.grandandtoy.ca</a>
Computers and printers	Reboot Canada <a href="http://www.rebootcanada.ca">www.rebootcanada.ca</a> 136 Geary Ave.#110 416-534-6017
Batteries	Lobby of Health Sciences Building and other locations on campus. Click <a href="#">here</a>
Clothing, furniture and household items	<a href="http://www.goodwill.on.ca/2006_finddonate.html">www.goodwill.on.ca/2006_finddonate.html</a>
Sell your items	Craigslist <a href="http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites">http://www.craigslist.org/about/sites</a>
Eyeglasses	Any Lions Club of Canada – donation boxes across the GTA
CFLS, Paint Cans, Batteries	Home Improvement/Renovation Stores (like Home Depot, Lowes and Rona)
City of Toronto Database	A comprehensive list of locations in the City of Toronto, accepting a wide. <a href="http://www.toronto.ca/reuseit/nonprofit.htm">www.toronto.ca/reuseit/nonprofit.htm</a>
Coats, games, books etc.	Covenant House Toronto. Click <a href="#">here</a>

### Did you know?

The City of Toronto's green bin program started in Etobicoke in September 2002 and has since expanded to over 510,000 single family homes. Currently pilot projects are under way to begin organics recycling in 30 multi unit buildings. In 2006 Toronto diverted more than 87,000 tones of organic waste from landfills, this is an increase of about 50,000 tones diverted in 2004.

### Links and Events



#### The Story of Stuff

Click [here](#) for a 20-minute, fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns.

The award-winning movie *Garbage!* about a family that decides to track what they throw out in a year, and what they learn about stuff and about themselves a long the way  
[www.garbagerevolution.com](http://www.garbagerevolution.com)



#### Earth Day 2009

Worldwide Earth Day is on April 22nd, for more information: [www.earthday.net/](http://www.earthday.net/)

#### Energy Conservation Week

May 17 to 23, 2009, events are planned across the GTA.

Click [here](#).



### Contact Us!

For questions, information or to participate in our group please contact the work group at: [greening@sph.utoronto.ca](mailto:greening@sph.utoronto.ca)



The greening Work Group at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health established in May 2008. The mandate of the Work Group is to implement the Dalla Lana School of Public Health environmental plan.



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