TC Metro Growers Network event summary ...

**Compost! - Saturday, September 25th**
At the Urban Ventures Greenway Gardens with Minnehaha Falls Landscaping

**Julia Otten** from Urban Ventures showed off the amazing gardens along the Greenway that provides fresh produce for the Phillips Neighborhood of South Minneapolis. Otten shared some challenges that have arisen with their hand-turned three-bin compost system, especially dealing with large, woody material such as brassica stalks and branches, a common problem for growers. She said the compost bins are an essential part of their organic waste recycling on the farm. Urban Ventures hosts many field trips and classes for area youth. “Elementary and middle school students take the temperature of the compost piles, learn about microbes, search for insects, and get to see how the piles transform leaves and garden wastes into rich, dark compost that in turn nourishes the garden”. Urban Ventures hosted the Network in 2019: [www.sfa-mn.org/tc-metro-growers-network-past-events/#2](http://www.sfa-mn.org/tc-metro-growers-network-past-events/#2)

Veteran composters **Russ Henry** and **Chesney Engquist** of Minnehaha Falls Landscaping shared their recipe for an easy to manage worm compost bin. They shared soil health tips for lawns, gardens, farms and natural spaces. Engquist emphasized that “keeping organic materials out of the waste stream and capturing nutrients in our soils helps support abundant plant growth, clean water and healthy ecosystems & communities”. Consider the magic and power of soil biology: there are more organisms in a teaspoon of soil that people on earth! Compost is an urban grower’s key to soil health. And while all compost is good, not all compost is the same. **What’s in your compost pile?**

- **Compost in a bin -- Mimicking nature.** Bacteria, mycorrhizal fungi, actinomycetes – the very small things that power the soil. These landscapers have great success growing transplants inoculated with their high carbon-based compost mixes.

- **Worm Bin - How To** from Minnehaha Landscape: [https://minnehahafallslandscape.com/blog/how-to-worm-bins-compost--health](https://minnehahafallslandscape.com/blog/how-to-worm-bins-compost--health)

Also, **Backyard Food Forest – How To:**

- **Worm Bin - How To** from Minnehaha Landscape:

The soil health principles: Keep the soil covered, minimize soil disturbance, increase crop diversity, keep living roots in the soil, and integrate livestock. (Are microbes “livestock”?) Compost enlivens, i.e., restores ecological functionality to, degraded soils.

Questions? Contact Network coordinator Karl Hakanson, Agriculture & Natural Resources, U of MN Extension- Hennepin County / khakanso@umn.edu / Photos Karl Hakanson – v10/12/21

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