

WASTE WATCH

Learn about composting on Town Day

By Mary Beth Calnan

Visit the DPW table during Town Day from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 20 for information on composting actions to take if critters have invaded a bin; names of curbside food composting companies and both types of composters will be on display.

Many people think composting is only for environmentalists, but most people can manage it successfully. Composting reduces household trash and creates a product that enriches soil and feeds gardens.

First, the location of the compost pile has to be

determined. It should be situated in a convenient, shady area that has good drainage. A bin is required when composting kitchen scraps. Bins look neat and help keep heat and moisture in. Belmont residents can buy the two types of affordable bins, New Age or Earth Machine at the Homer Municipal Building (diagonally behind Town Hall). Either sells for \$25. It is wise to start with the inexpensive bins to discover what type of set-up fits your needs and then invest in a more expensive bin online or at hardware stores later.

The compost bin is filled with these ingredients: food, moisture and air. Food for the composter has roughly a 3:1 ratio of carbon (brown) to nitrogen (green). Examples of carbon are fall leaves, straw, paper, paper towels and napkins, and coffee filters. Examples of nitrogen are grass clippings, weeds, fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, coffee grounds and tea bags. Do not add meat, dairy, grease, cooked food, dog or cat manure, branches, diseased plants or weeds that spread by runners. Water is added until ingredients are the consistency of a wrung-out sponge. Air is needed to provide oxygen. Turning, poking holes with a pitchfork or placing bulky browns in the bin once a week provides air spaces.

Oxygen helps the breakdown of materials and keeps malodorous anaerobic organisms at bay. When the three ingredients are properly placed in the bin and produce an environment, microorganisms enter and breakdown the compost. These decomposers are naturally occurring bacteria, which are assisted by molds and fungi, mites, beetles, centipedes, millipedes and earthworms. It takes about six months for the compost to be ready for use. It will appear dark brown or black, crumbly and earthy smelling. Finished compost can be used as topsoil on lawns or gardens, mulch

around trees and shrubs or potting soil. The finished compost works by releasing nutrients, helping to retain moisture, and acting as a natural alternative to chemical fertilizers. I personally have been composting and found it was easier to have two bins, a working bin that I was actively adding browns and greens into and a resting bin that was full and ready for use. All my fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grinds and filters, tea bags, egg shells, used paper towels and napkins are tossed in a kitchen scrap bucket next to the sink and then emptied into my working compost bin about every three days. If I am

planting spring flowers I go into my resting bin and mix finished compost into my garden soil or I use it in pots when I need potting soil. It is also a great help with grass seeds in the bare patches of the lawn. It is easy, free and satisfying to know that I am composting my kitchen scraps into a product that is good for my lawn and plants instead of throwing them in the trash where they will be incinerated which the town pays for by the ton. Thank you for reducing, reusing and recycling. Any questions or suggestions, please contact Mary Beth Calnan, Belmont Recycling coordinator, at mcalnan@belmont-ma.gov or 617-993-2689.

AROUND BELMONT

Golden Shoes: May 1-31.

Only one prize per family. Participants will follow direction on each shoe. Shoes must be returned to the health department before the prize is awarded. People may walk as a family. Shoes will be hidden throughout Belmont. People can win a prize. Local businesses donated prizes. Sponsored by Belmont Department of Health- Youth and Family Services Programs:

away on vacation between Aug. 14 and Labor Day. They will work around those vacation conflicts. For the auction, bring a headshot (if you have one), a resume, and a list of any conflict dates between Aug. 14 and Oct. 22. Monologues of no more than one minute are welcome, but not required. Monologues do not need to be memorized. No prior Shakespeare experience is necessary. Wear clothing

of medications properly. Community Resource Fair: 2:15-2:45 p.m. Communities can work together to reduce the negative impacts of addiction. Learn about the organizations fighting opioid abuse in the Belmont community. Outreach tables from Belmont emergency responders and agencies that provide substance abuse prevention education, inpatient and out-patient treatment, peer support,

Now Open: The Belmont Aquatic Team development swim program is an instructional swim course offered for children ages 6-11 who want to improve their stroke technique. Registration is taking place now for the program that will run until June 14. Participants will meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 4:45 p.m. at the Belmont High School Higginbottom Pool. It is run by BAT's coaches.

Life Support for health care providers, dental hygienists and health care students will be held from for additional information call/text 4-1280-0606 or email cprsuccess@gmail.com.

Belmont Community Chorus seeking singers: The Chorus welcomes all singers (ages 12 and up) who love to sing. Spring session began Feb. 27, and runs through mid-May.

LIBRARY LINES

Library Friends

Come and browse through the Library Friends' Every Day Book Sale in the main lobby of the Belmont Public Library. Gently used hardcover books and paperbacks for patrons of all ages and interests are on sale during library hours. There is an honor box for pavement. All pro-