

## **Recycling and Solid Waste Diversion: Kitchen waste is the next big thing!**

by Gordon Jamieson

Over the past twelve years, Arlington has reduced the amount of solid waste (i.e. garbage) that we send to the co-generation incinerator in North Andover by over thirty percent; resulting in a cumulative savings to the town of over two million dollars. Thank you Arlington!

The recent addition of weekly recycling collection insures that it is easy to recycle all the newspapers, magazines, bottles, cans, cardboard and scrap paper that are produced in our homes on a regular basis. Semi-annual community collection days (Nov and May) and the new monthly recycling center collection days, as well as the many textile and book collection boxes and collection sites (e.g. Goodwill) around town, permit residents to readily recycle many additional hard to recycle items that are not collected curbside!

So what's next?! The next big thing is kitchen waste, as it represents twenty to twenty-five percent of the 12,500 tons of solid waste we pay to incinerate each and every year. So how can you help reduce our solid waste tonnage?!

First, be sure to empty all containers of liquid before placing them in your recycling bin/container!

Next, consider one or more of the following ways of reducing the amount of kitchen waste in your trash

+ Composting: Back yard compost bins are available for purchase daily at the Department of Public Works. And both the Department of Public Works and several community education programs can hook you up with proper composting procedures so that you can get up and running quickly!

+ Composting alternatives: Don't have space or time to compost on-site? No problem! Bootstrap Compost ([www.bootstrapcompost.com](http://www.bootstrapcompost.com)) will, for a small fee, stop by your home on a regular basis, collect your kitchen waste compostable items and compost them off-site. No muss no fuss!

+ Shared composting: The Arlington Recycling Committee (ARC) in partnership with the Department of Public Works is sponsoring a trial program in which two or more families share a single composting bin. In return for committing to sharing a composting bin with one or more families -and- providing us with some feedback on how it goes; we will provide you with a free composting bin. Contact DPW to learn how to sign up. Alternatively, let's say that you're already an avid composter; then why not consider offering one or more neighbors the chance to become shared composters with you and your family. We look forward to learning about your success stories!

+ Garbage disposal: Assuming that your plumbing is in good shape, much of the kitchen waste you generate including, vegetable trimmings, light table scraps, etc. can be safely disposed of down the drain. Where, similar to other solid waste flowing through the town's sewage system, it will be anaerobically fermented into methane for use in powering the waste disposal process at MWRA's Deer Island Facility. Just be sure to not dispose of bones, grease and fibrous materials (corn husks and the like) this way!

Potential Savings: If each Arlington household used one or more of these methods to reduce their kitchen waste production by just ½ pound a day. Yes just ½ pound a day. We could reduce our annual solid waste disposal tonnage by almost two thousand tons, providing an annual savings of up to \$125,000 per year!

Reduce - Reuse - Recycle!