#2

SEEDING CHANGE

Fact Sheet on Composting

What is composting?

Composting is a recycling method to create a fertilizer-rich soil amendment from organic food scraps (Al-Aomar et al., 2022). Composting adds minerals and nutrients to the soil for plant growth and microbiome health. The food scraps and natural waste is broken down aerobically (with oxygen present).

Composting at UNAM:

Where does compost develop?

Compost is held in composting bins or drums. Any bin can be used to hold compost as long as it is rotated or mixed every 3-4 days.

How do you maintain compost?

The main "ingredients" for successful composting include organic matter such as water, oxygen, carbon-rich materials, and nitrogen-rich materials (Cerda et al., 2018). Nitrogen-rich materials include many green plants like grass or food scraps. Carbon-rich materials include things like untreated paper and cardboard.

What are the benefits of composting?

Composting is an eco-friendly and sustainable method of supporting soil health for plants. It is also a productive method of recycling scraps that would otherwise not be used.

An example of a composting system at Urban Harvest in Windhoek.

Contacts/References for Composting:

Sofia Ndokosho:
Sofia is the cafeteria leader on campus and is willing to provide food scraps from cafeteria waste for the compost pile.

- sndokosho@yahoo.com

Below are several sites to consult for starting a compost pile:

- https://www.nrdc.org/stories/composting-101
- https://www.npr.org/2020/04/07/828918397/how-to-compost-at-home

Advantages of Composting

Reduces Waste

Diverts organic waste into nutrients to improve soil fertility (Al-Aomar et al., 2022).

Community Building

Promotes sustainability and shared responsibility (Christie & Waller, 2019).

Soil Fertility

Composting offers a rich source of nutrients and organic matter.

Disadvantages of Composting

Limited to Organic Waste

Only organic matter, such as food scraps and manure, can be used (Cerda et al., 2018).

Attracts Pests

Composting may attract flies and rodents if not properly managed (Christie & Waller, 2019).

Continued Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance is required, including aeration, turning, and monitoring moisture.

Composting

The final product of recycling organic matter to obtain a nutrient-rich soil amendment (Al-Aomar et al., 2022).

Organic Matter

Any material derived from living organisms, including plants and animals.

Nitrogen-Rich Materials

Organic matter such as vegetable scraps and grass clippings. Also known as"green material" (Cerda et al., 2018).

Carbon-Rich Materials

Organic matter such as sticks, dried leaves, and paper. Also known as "brown material" (Cerda et al., 2018).

References

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Christie, B., & Waller, V. (2019). Community learnings through residential composting in apartment buildings. The Journal of Environmental Education, 50(2), 97–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2018.1509289

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