

# Three scales of composting & compost tea

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Composting is a valuable part of our efforts to eliminate waste -- it can be called 'waste diversion' because it keeps organic waste out of the landfills and even turns it into valuable fertilizer. The end product is essentially "soil on steroids". In this TV episode, we took a look at three different scales of composting operations. The first photo shows me jogging, in just one of the bins, in the Halifax, Nova Scotia composting facility, before it was put into operation. Organic waste comes in the front end, gets moved toward the back by paddle wheels, and 21 days later, rich compost will be coming out the back end. This has helped to make Halifax's waste management facility one of the most modern and most efficient in the world -- and those compost bins are really big! The second photo shows a community gardening project in Toronto, Ontario, where people use the same process manually, mixing the right ingredients of wet and dry, or green and brown materials, through the bins, so that weeks later they have rich compost for their gardening project. It was only plus 10° F, or minus 12° C, on the day our cameras were there, and steam was coming off the top of the bins as the bacteria was working away and making heat inside the bins. You can compost at home, even inside an apartment. The key to indoor composting is to add earth worms to the compost. They will work through fresh material within a week, digesting it as they go and preventing any rotten vegetable odours in the kitchen. Robin Tench, from the City of Toronto, walked us through most of this, and then made me some 'compost tea'. No, it is not for drinking. Putting compost in a filter bag and suspending it in a container of water transfers the nutrients to the water and makes you some rich plant food water for your indoor plants! Just like letting grape juice rot into good wine, if we rot our garbage long enough, we get the richest of soil supplements to help us grow whatever we happen to be growing, and we take a large load off of the landfills.

**Keywords:**

Garden, Plants, Compost, Environmental, Ecology