

## Composting in Vanderhoof

First in a series of articles about waste reduction initiatives in the Vanderhoof area.

The Nechako Waste Reduction Initiative (NWRI) and the Nechako Valley Food Network (NVFN), both part of the Nechako Healthy Community Alliance, had a joint display at the Nechako Valley Exhibition.

One of their most important ongoing initiatives is to promote composting (bacteria, fungi, worms and other organisms living in the soil and air transform dead plants, leaves, etc into a rich dark material called humus or compost). There are two main types of composting, backyard composting and vermicomposting.

In Vanderhoof, there is a community 'backyard' compost site. Branches smaller than 6 cm in diameter, brush and grass clippings can be left at the Vanderhoof Compost Site, located next to the baseball fields at the end of Recreation Road. Composted soil is available for free at the site.

A study in 2009 commissioned by The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako found that 32% of the waste in the transfer stations represents compostable organic material, comprised of approximately 12% yard waste, 17% food waste, and 3% other waste. So, much of the yard waste produced in the Vanderhoof area can be composted.

Starting composting is easy. Buy or build a pest/rodent-resistant bin. Add carbon-rich materials (e.g. leaves, sawdust, paper) and nitrogen-rich materials (e.g. yard clippings, food waste). Composting recipe includes keeping it moist, adding air (turn the compost weekly), stirring, and chopping new material into small pieces. Follow this recipe, and your compost will be ready in 4-24 months.

At the Exhibition, a vermicomposting display was featured. Vermicomposting is composting with worms and is a good method of disposing of kitchen scraps. Also needed are shredded paper, leaves and sand. Over the course of 30-90 days, worm castings are produced, which are a rich fertilizer for lawns and indoor & outdoor plants.

Thank you to Vanderhoof & Districts Co-operative Association for their kind donation of a composter for our draw at the exhibition.

**The NWRI's counterpart in Prince George is the Recycling and Action Planning Society which operates a compost demonstration garden, with a variety of composters, which is located next to Fort George Park. Visit REAPS' website ([www.reaps.org](http://www.reaps.org)), to learn in detail how to compost and for information on upcoming composting courses.**