

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



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EXTENSION
OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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Notes: Don't have a compost bin? Find simple plans, plus backyard composting basics, in Ohio State University Extension's "Composting at Home" fact sheet, <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1189.html>. COOL 2012 (<http://www.cool2012.com/>) is a joint effort of the GrassRoots Recycling Network, *BioCycle* magazine, and a non-profit group called Eco-Cycle. See examples of community collection programs at <http://www.cool2012.com/community/collection/>. Read about Ohio's grant program for food-scrap composting at http://www.jgpress.com/archives/_free/001427.html. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas — a gas in the atmosphere that adds to global warming.

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Q. Dear Twig: OK, so what's a better thing to do with food waste — be it old fish tacos, be it stale Cheez Doodles, be it bags of muffin stumps — than bury it in a landfill?

A. "Be it"? OK then. The answer is it be way better to turn it into **compost**. At home, for example, you can save your family's food scraps in a bucket with a lid. Then, every few days, you can haul them outside and dump them into a **compost bin** (if you have one). They'll turn into super-great **plant food**.

In the country, you can do like my human friend Hornbeam does. He gives all his food scraps to his chickens. They give him fresh eggs in trade.

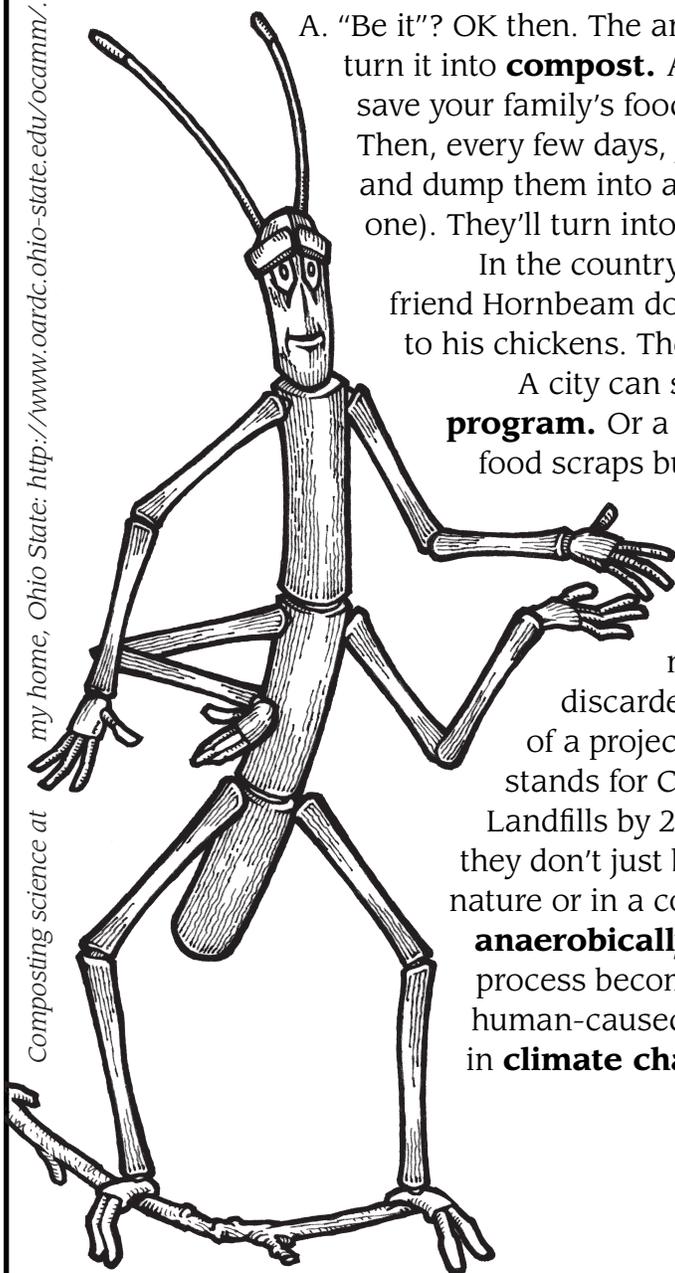
A city can start a **curbside collection program**. Or a **drop-off center**. For not only food scraps but yard waste and paper. Places like Mackinac Island, Michigan, and Seattle, Washington, have already done it.

"These (compostable) materials amount to half of our discarded resources," says the Web site of a project called COOL 2012. (The name stands for Compostable Organics Out of Landfills by 2012.) "When buried in a landfill, they don't just break down as they would in nature or in a compost pile. They decompose **anaerobically**, without oxygen, and in the process become the number-one source of human-caused **methane** and a major player in **climate change**."

Non-gaseously,

Twig

Composting science at my home, Ohio State: <http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/ocamm/>.



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (www.oardc.ohio-state.edu) and OSU Extension (extension.osu.edu).