

Descanso Garden Club
September 13, 2018

Guest :

County of San Diego and Solana Center - Backyard Composting Speaker: Jennifer Galej

Regular Monthly Business Meeting Minutes:

Called to order by President Linda Good at 4:30 PM and welcomed all new people and members.

In attendance: Linda Hoody, Susan Lancaster, Linda Good, Cathi Fitch. Tina Love, Eleanor Jensen, Richard Jensen, Sherree McGinley, Sarah Lovio, Barbie Duda, Patricia Bauer, Vicky Jones, Bill Bauer, Terry Gibson, Trisha Weinberg, Phil Weinberg, Brenda Tracy, Christine Buckmaster, Lisa Stoveken, Debbie Gonzales, Devon Gonzales, Dave Lyons

1. Announced that membership is available to all, membership forms available. Welcome to all. Invitation to join.
2. Good things: Pulling into Descanso valley seeing two deer in meadow is such a wonderful sight.
3. Treasurer report: 9-24-18 District meeting Sherree and Eleanor are attending. Sherree and Terry are attending local flower show.
4. Vice President Linda Hoody has been working for five years to get this presentation to Descanso. Introduction of Jennifer Galej and Torey.
 1. Solana Center began the first Recycling later bought out by EDDCO
 2. Charles Darwin in 1881 knew that worms make the world go round.
 3. Composting
 1. Nature decomposes, we compost
 2. FBI. Fungi, Bacteria, Invertebrates: Symbiotic relationship
 3. Always works, many ways to do composting, your choice
 4. Why compost? Conserve resources, improve health of gardens, water retention, improves soil, save money, carbon sequestration.
 5. Reducing what goes to the landfill. Only 3% of waste must go to the landfill.
 4. Worm and regular composting
 1. Complement to traditional composting
 2. Divert food waste from landfills
 3. Produce nutrient rich castings
 4. Worms compared to traditional composting (less space, less time, less physical strength, faster production of compost)
5. Worm Biology
 1. 4000 Species
 2. Red wigglers (used to compost), tiger worms
 3. Eat half their weight in food water daily
 4. Tolerate wide temperature ranges
 5. Reproduce rapidly in captivity
 6. Anatomy (no eyes, brain, mouth, 5 pairs of hearts, crop, esophagus, no teeth, gizzard, intestine, breath thru their skins).
 7. Worms like egg shells and grit
 8. Cannot handle heavy oil or sun or heat they die
6. Worm bins
 1. Make or buy a bin with a lid and air vents
 2. Inside (garage, utility room or under sink)
 3. Lid keeps critters and flies out
 4. Wrigley Ranch, Barrel of Worms, or homemade
 5. Should never smell
 6. Outside or in-ground giant worm bins (they go in and out of the in-ground barrel, but return to feed) straw with aged manure,
7. Bedding -coconut coir not peat moss, shredded paper, outside leaf mulch or they give away bags of grounds), sand or egg shells. Pre soak leaves
8. Moisture and Air- keep worm bin moist "wrung out sponge", too little water - dry out, too much water anaerobic (smelly)
9. Foods worms like: fruits and vegetables, chop or cook hard foods, coffee grounds and tea bags, small amounts of onion, breads and pastas, food much be buried under bedding
10. Troubleshooting
 1. Do not smother
 2. Use moderation of new foods
 3. Solana Center has a "ROT" line to answer questions/concerns
 4. Bin is too wet - Add more dry bedding
 5. Bin is too dry -Add water with watering can or spray bottle.
 6. Worms are trying to escape - conditions are not ideal. Assess temperature, moistures level, pH , sunlight, amount of food
 7. Worms are dying - bin is either too wet or today, worms do not have enough food, food is too acidic, smothering effect
 8. Worms are being preyed upon- Make sure lid is secure, holes less than 1/4 " . Rodents might be getting in, search for centipedes and remove
 11. Foods to avoid - meat, fish, dairy, oils, salad dressings, citrus. Attracts critters
 12. A Happy Home- If water, air, and food needs are met bins will not smell and worms will reproduce rapidly. Cocoons create several new ones, they are hermaphrodite. Fungi and Bacteria are the decomposers. Millipedes are ok. Centipedes eat worms and move fast and are flat and bluish.

13. Harvesting- Harvest after a few months, methods for separating worms from castings (migration, attract with favorite food, volcanoes made in piles) Look for paper to disappear. Stop feeding, shove all to one side, make up new bedding, food on new side. Majority come over. Not all will come over. Stack trays and they will migrate up. Especially if favorite food (melon) is on top.

14. Using the worm castings:

1. Mix in with potting soil

2. Dig in around plants

3. Make worm tea. - Leachate(water at bottom of bin) use on roses and

worm tea. Worm Tea - Take a

leaves puts

bacteria on them.

trees not food products vs handful of casting and add a bucket of non-tap water. Spray on

4. Biologically sound soil