

International Composting Awareness Week

Go on, get your hands dirty!

Emily Gambold – Environmental Intern



Photo credit: International Composting Awareness Week Australia, 2019

Starting on May 5th and running through the week till the 11th of May, a number of events and activities will be taking place near you as part of International Composting Awareness Week (ICAW). Originating in Canada in 1995, ICAW has grown to be celebrated internationally every year in the first full week of May and has been running in Australia since 2006. This year's theme for ICAW Australia is 'Better Soil, Better Life, Better Future' (International Compost Awareness Week Australia, 2019).

So, what is ICAW about?

The aim of ICAW is to raise awareness of the benefits associated with using compost at home and at work. In Australia, almost half of the rubbish that ends up in landfill is food or garden waste. As this waste rots in a landfill, methane gas, a greenhouse gas (GHG) is released into the atmosphere, which directly affects climate change. Alternatively, if the household wastes are diverted to a composting system which relies on nature's microbes to break down the waste materials, a material rich in



Photo credit: Bokashi Composting Australia, 2014

nutrients is produced. This nutrient-rich material can then be put back into the soil to be utilised by plants including fruit and vegetables to grow and thrive (City of Vincent, 2019; International Compost Awareness Week Australia, 2019; The Green Life Soil Co, 2019).

Some of the benefits associated with composting include:

- Reducing the amount of food waste entering the landfill
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions (i.e. methane)
- Improving soil quality (by adding nutrients) and soil water holding capacity when mixed into soils – saving water and consumption costs
- Reducing the requirement for fertilisers and pesticides
- Potential increases in yield of fruit trees and vegetable gardens

(Bokashi Composting Australia, 2014; International Compost Awareness Week Australia, 2019; The Compost Revolution, 2019)



Get Involved



To find out what events and activities are happening near you this week, get in contact with your local council, look on Facebook for community group events, or check out the [ICAW Australia calendar](#).



Composting systems

Composting systems available include:

- Bokashi
- Bins – open and cold
- Worm farms
- Tumblers
- Hot composting
- Cold composting
- Inground composting



Photo credit: The Green Life Soil Co, 2019



Photo Credit: Bokashi Composting Australia, 2014

(Bokashi Composting Australia, 2016)

When you are ready to commit to a system that works for you, remember to check if your local council will provide you with a subsidy. The Compost Revolution (2019) also offers discounts for equipment, so do your research! Some councils may provide fact sheets on the different types of composting systems as well as free workshops for residents (City of Vincent, 2019).

Or if you would prefer to contribute to an established compost, you have a few options. Get in contact with a community garden in your area or contribute to a neighbour's compost through the [ShareWaste](#) program (2016).



Get involved with Composting Awareness Week

ICAW Australia has a photo competition running for the month of May. To participate, all you need to do is use the hashtag [#CelebrateICAW](#) when posting photos of your compost or activities and events you attend to social media. Winners will be drawn on the 10th of June (International Compost Awareness Week Australia, 2019)

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■ environment ■ safety ■ community

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