

March 27, 2013

Manage manure and compost with compassion

Caring for soil is part of being a steward of the land, and North Island College is offering a workshop on managing soil and manure for farmers, landowners and backyard gardeners with the environment in mind.

On Tuesday, Apr. 2 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., learn about managing manure compost, and tips for pasture management that can reduce feed costs and minimize the need for chemical amendments.

"We will discuss pasture management techniques including weed management, seed selection, rotational grazing, practical manure management tips, regulations, and composting techniques to create your own black gold," says instructor Andrea Lawseth of Agroecological Consulting.

"Your animals are literally what they eat, and through proper pasture care, you can maintain their health and well-being," Lawseth adds. *"For horse owners, boarders, or small-lot farmers, this workshop will be a heap of help! Gardeners or people with manure-producing animals will also benefit from tips to avoid smelly compost piles riddled with flies. Your soil and your neighbours will thank you."*

In addition to proper pasture and manure management techniques, participants will learn effective ways to manage composting systems.

Did you know? Adding organic matter to soil through composting, helps sequester carbon, reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. According to PA Yeoman, an Austrian agricultural specialist and inventor: *"With a 1.6 per cent increase in organic matter in topsoil on the earth's agricultural lands, we would reduce atmospheric CO2 levels by 100ppm (i.e. to pre-20th century levels) and [help] solve the global warming crisis."*

In addition to mitigating the greenhouse effect, adding organic matter to soil enhances its fertility and provides more nutrients for crops. It also increases total water retention from 30 per cent to as much as 300 per cent, which means cleaner water and reduced leaching.

"Every action counts, and taking care of the soil is part of the solution to our environmental challenges," says Kira DeSorcy, Lettuce Grow lead instructor. *"We can act locally now and make a difference."*

Register for Lettuce Grow courses or workshops online at www.nic.bc.ca

Like this article? What to hear more? Is there a workshop you would like us to organize? Write us your questions and requests to growlocal@campbellriver.ca

The Lettuce Grow courses and article series support the implementation of the City's Agriculture Plan and the community sustainability goal of local food self-sufficiency and resiliency.

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