



# Lochaber ComPost

## News From Lochaber Master Composter Programme



### Lochaber Master Composter Project Update

The Master Composter Programme has been running in Lochaber since Autumn 2008. We now have an enthusiastic network of Master Composter volunteers giving talks to groups; visiting primary schools; carrying out local surveys and giving individual help and advice to friends and neighbours around



*If your compost looks like this you should be entering our Compost Competitions*

Lochaber.

To date we have volunteers in Arisaig; Lochaline; Glencoe; Kinlochleven; Glenruig; Acharacle; Spean Bridge; Fort William; Inverlochy; Ardgour; Strontian; Onich; Lochailort and Eigg (A list of contacts is at the back of the newsletter).

However we still have a few gaps in the Lochaber map, and would like to recruit more volunteers to spread the home composting word.

You don't need to be an 'expert' composter, as we can help you with advice and training. If you are enthusiastic, and keen to get involved in helping to reduce Lochaber's landfill and play a part in creating

a more sustainable community to live in we would like to hear from you.

*The aim of the Master Composter Programme is to recruit and train enthusiastic 'composting' volunteers to encourage home composting*

*There are currently twelve Master Composter projects around Scotland, and more information on these can be found on the CRNS website at [www.crn.org.uk](http://www.crn.org.uk)*

*More information on UK wide Master Composting programmes can be found at [www.homecomposting.org.uk](http://www.homecomposting.org.uk)*



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### Changes at Master Composter Programme

Kirstie Shirra who has been the Master Composter Coordinator since the start of the programme has left to concentrate on writing a book—keep an eye open for her publication on Lochaber Short Walks.

She has been replaced by

Liz Paul from Duror, who recently worked with Lantra the Sector Skill Council for the Landbased and Environmental Sector. Liz gave up her full time work in April this year and when not working on the Master Compost

Programme is busy setting up her market gardening Cuil Bay, Duror.

Visitors are welcome.

You can contact Liz on 01631 740571, or e.mail [liz.paul@l-e-g.org.uk](mailto:liz.paul@l-e-g.org.uk)



Liz in her Garden

## Master Composter Profile—Anna McLaren

Anna is our Master Compost Coordinator in the Ardgour area. An experienced and knowledgeable gardener Anna runs the Ardaraich Hill Nursery just outside Ardgour. This magical 8 acre hill garden contains an amazing collection of more than a thousand different rhododendrons, acers and other rare trees and shrubs.

We caught up with Anna and asked her to tell us a bit about her gardening background

### How long have you been gardening?

*I have been gardening since childhood and seriously on my own garden since 18*

### What is your main gardening interest?

*My main interest in gardening is Design and I ran a Garden Design, Build and Maintenance business in Bath for 10 years in the days before gardening was the trendy thing for nice middle class girls to do!*

### How long have you been composting?

*I have been composting since living on a commune!!! outside Bath when I left home at 18 ( 35 years)*

### Why do you compost?

*I compost to make a garden sustainable within itself, to avoid land fill and to prevent buying gardening products, an extension of our consumer age! If you don't buy a frock. buy a gardening product and get the gloves to match!*

### How do you use your compost?

*My most recent passion is my poly tunnel and we now use our compost to make raised beds, to make potting compost for the nursery and to top dress shrubs and new plantings in the garden.*

### Have you changed the way you compost in the last few years?

*Yes, I have changed my composting technique since attending the WRAP course in Edinburgh and learning about the crisis in landfill. I now compost all household waste paper except mags which get recycled.*

*In our case we have an enormous amount of browns and few greens but we produce a lot of kitchen waste to try and balance it out.*

*When I did the RHS General the ratio was 20 to 1 Carbon to N but now it seems to have stretched to 30 Carbon to 1 N so it still seems to work.*

### Can people interested in composting come and visit you and get some tips?

***Yes; yes; yes; please!***



Anna working in her Polytunnel

*I compost to make a garden sustainable within itself, to avoid land fill and to prevent buying gardening products, an extension of our consumer age!*

The average household in Scotland produced 1,197 kg of waste last year (or 1.197 tonnes)



## Making Compost Tea

Compost Tea is a compost infusion which, when sprayed onto plants, can benefit them by preventing pests and disease spreading. Crops treated with compost tea should be washed before consuming and should not be used on leafy vegetables that will be eaten raw.

To make Compost Tea:

1. Fill a bucket with one part mature compost to five parts water.
2. Stir, cover and leave to ferment for ten days.
3. Strain into another bucket, leave to settle, then spray the liquid onto affected plants.
4. Repeat after two to three weeks.



## Compost Competitions

### Win £20 Farm Shop Vouchers

Summer is the time to dig out your best compost and try to win one of our series of Compost Competitions

So far we have had competitions at both Arisaig and Kilchoan Shows

#### Arisaig Winners:

1st Judy Budge Arisaig

2nd John Morrison Arisaig

3rd Marion Dyer Arisaig

#### Kilchoan Winners:

1st Lois Livett

2nd Pat MacPhail

### Win Free Membership to Garden Organic

Garden Organic, the UK's leading organic growing charity, has been at the forefront of the organic horticulture movement for 50 years and is dedicated to researching and promoting organic gardening, farming and food.

Garden Organic are generously sponsoring one of our main compost prizes this year with a free years membership to the organisation, and we plan to announce the winner at the Lochaber Show.

[www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)

### Win a Compost Bin

Look out for our Win a Bin compost quiz.. Questionnaires can be picked up at LEG stands at Agricultural shows or from our Master Compost Volunteers.

A shiny new compost bin with a Carry Caddy for the kitchen and a Welcome pack will be won in each area where we have Master Compost Volunteers.

The draws for the winners will take place at the end of August.

## Questions & Answers

### Q. What do I do with all the weeds in my garden?

*A. Perennial weeds, e.g. Docks and Dandelions, are likely to continue growing if you put them straight into the compost bin, so you should pre-treat them first. To do this put them into a black sack, seal the top and leave them in a sunny position for 6 months to allow the contents to rot down into a brown sludge. Alternatively, leave them in a bucket of water with a lid on. Add the weeds to the compost bin when they are thoroughly*

*decomposed.*

*Annual weeds such as Nettles and Meadow Grass are suitable to put in the compost bin as long as they don't have seed heads. If they have already gone to seed, they should receive the same treatment as perennials.*

### Q How long will my compost take to be ready?

*A: Compost can be made in six to eight weeks, or it can take a year or more. In general, the more effort you put in, the quicker you will get compost.*

*When the ingredients you have put in your container have turned into a dark brown, earthy smelling material, the composting process is complete. It is then best left for a month or two to 'mature' before it is used. Don't worry if your compost is not fine and crumbly. Even if it is lumpy, sticky or stringy, with bits of twig and eggshell still obvious, it is quite usable.*

## Are you interested in being one of our Master Composters

Contact the LEG Office for Further Information 01397 700090

## Children's Compost Corner Spot the Difference



#### Remember

- The creatures that help our waste to compost need a supply of oxygen, especially during their more active Summer months. Agitating the compost every few weeks or adding scrunched up bits of cardboard will create air pockets keeping them happy.

## Now for Something a Little Different

### Compost Preparations For Biodynamic Gardening

Compost preparations, used for preparing compost, employ herbs which are frequently used in medicinal remedies:

**502:** Yarrow blossoms (*Achillea millefolium*) are stuffed into urinary bladders from Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), placed in the sun during summer, buried in earth during winter and retrieved in the spring.

**503:** Chamomile blossoms (*Matricaria recutita*) are stuffed into small intestines from cattle buried in humus-rich earth in the autumn and retrieved in the spring.

**504:** Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) plants in full bloom are stuffed together underground surrounded on all sides by peat for a year.

**505:** Oak bark (*Quercus robur*) is chopped in small pieces, placed inside the skull of a domesticated animal, surrounded by peat and buried in earth in a place where lots of rain water runs past.

**506:** Dandelion flowers (*Taraxacum officinale*) is stuffed into the peritoneum of cattle and buried in earth during winter and retrieved in the spring.

**507:** Valerian flowers (*Valeriana officinalis*) are extracted into water.

**508:** Horsetail (*Equisetum*) One to three grams (a teaspoon) of each preparation is added to a dung heap by digging 50 cm deep holes with a distance of 2 meters from each other, except for the 507 preparation, which is stirred into 5 litres of water and sprayed over the entire compost surface. All preparations are thus used in homeopathic quantities. Each compost preparation is designed to guide a particular decomposition process in the composting mass.

One study found that the oak bark preparation improved disease resistance in zucchini.

**Check out the Latest Special Offers on Compost Bins**  
[www.recyclenow.com/home\\_composting/buy\\_a\\_bin/](http://www.recyclenow.com/home_composting/buy_a_bin/)

#### Lochaber Master Composters

Arisaig	John Morrison; Gordon Stewart; Jo Markland
Ardgour	Anna MacLaren
Kinlochleven	Liz Friel; Maggie Carmichael
Fort William	Jeanette MacMillan; Isabel Campbell
Spean Bridge	Christine Clephan
Strontian	Bill Barber
Onich	Katherine Gormley; Lisa Glaze
Glencoe	John Mortimer
Kilchoan	Jacqui Chappel
Lochaline	Lesley Jones
Lochyside	Lin Ramsey
Glenuig	Roma Scott; Sue Cox

#### EVENTS

Look for us at the following shows and events:

Sunart Show	8 August
Glencoe Flower Show	22 August
Lochaber Show	22 August
Kinlochmoidart Show	29 August

Local Produce Fairs in Acharacle, Strontian and Onich

#### Scotlands Gardens Open

Bluebell Croft Strontian 5 September

12—5.30

(Leg Composting Demonstration Site)

## LOST



HAVE YOU SEEN  
THE LOCHABER  
SHOW COMPOST  
TROPHY?

IF YOU KNOW WHERE  
IT IS PLEASE CONTACT  
THE LEG OFFICE!!