

# The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices



## Composting at Home



### Compost Your Food Scraps for a Healthier Planet

*More than half of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills come from wasted food.*

*Composting food scraps reduces emissions, and using compost helps build healthy soils.*

#### Decreases Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Composting reduces methane emissions by keeping wasted food out of landfills. Applying compost to the soil reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, avoiding emissions from their manufacture and use.

#### Builds Flood & Drought Resilience

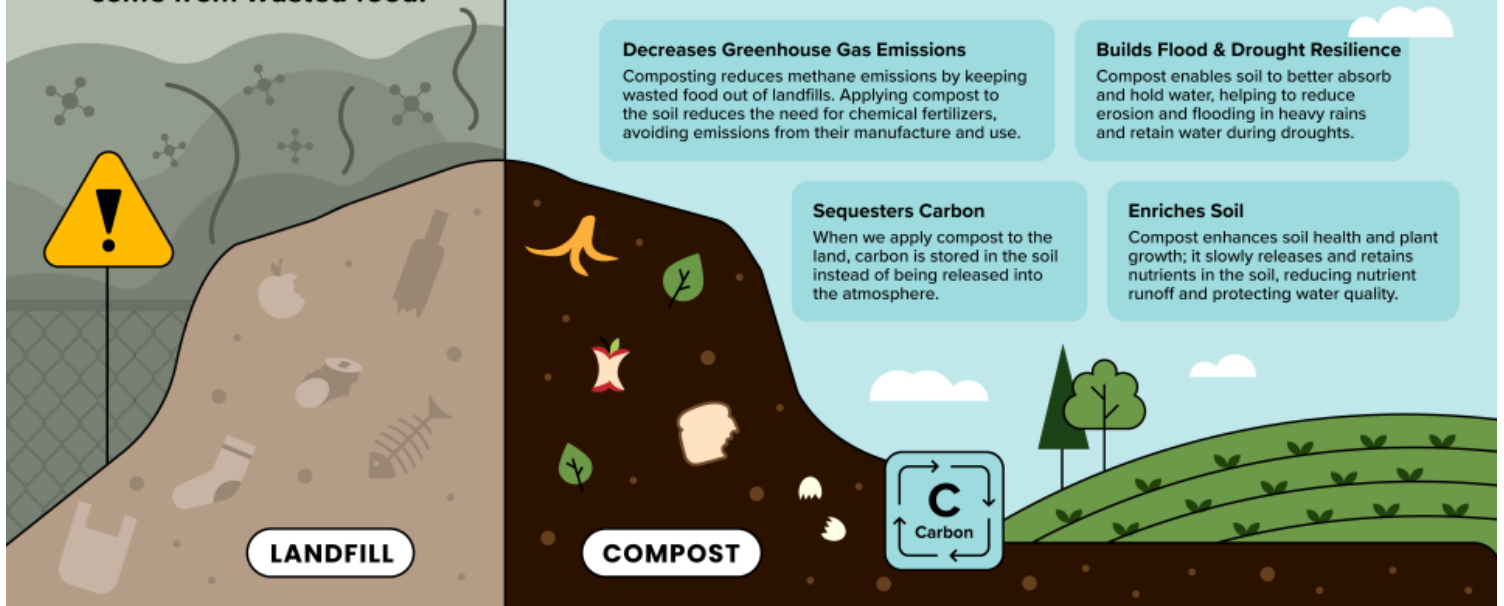
Compost enables soil to better absorb and hold water, helping to reduce erosion and flooding in heavy rains and retain water during droughts.

#### Sequesters Carbon

When we apply compost to the land, carbon is stored in the soil instead of being released into the atmosphere.

#### Enriches Soil

Compost enhances soil health and plant growth; it slowly releases and retains nutrients in the soil, reducing nutrient runoff and protecting water quality.



30% of the U.S. food supply goes unsold or uneaten each year, and most of it ends up in landfills. When food scraps and other organic materials are buried in landfills, they take up limited space and decompose without oxygen, creating methane—a potent greenhouse gas. With many Tennessee landfills nearing capacity, reducing organic waste is more important than ever. One of the easiest ways to help is by composting at home. Composting transforms your food scraps and yard waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment that also improves soil health.

Explore a few composting options below to get started.

**Backyard Composting**

This method uses a bin or pile to combine “greens” (food scraps, coffee grounds) and “browns” (leaves, cardboard). With occasional turning and moisture, materials break down naturally over a few months.

**Worm Composting (Vermicomposting)**

This method is ideal for small spaces or apartments. Vermicomposting uses red wiggler worms in a contained bin to break down food scraps quickly and with minimal odor.

**Composting Pick-Up Services or Drop-Offs**

Many Tennessee communities offer curbside pickup or local drop-off sites for food scraps. This is a convenient, low-effort way to keep organic waste out of landfills.

# Free Composters and Composting Workshop

Are you interested in starting backyard composting? Join the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation’s free composting workshop. You’ll learn everything you need to get started and receive a free, high-quality backyard composter to take home.

**Date**

Saturday, May 9

**Session Times**

Morning: 9:00–10:00 AM

Afternoon: 1:00–2:00 PM

**Location**

Fleming Training Center

**Address**

2022 Blanton Dr, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

REGISTER MORNING SESSION

REGISTER AFTERNOON SESSION



# COMPOSTING

## WORKSHOP



Learn how to start and maintain your own backyard compost. Take home a free composter.

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Murfreesboro, TN 37129



All participants will receive a FREE backyard composter to take home!

[REGISTER MORNING SESSION](#)

[REGISTER AFTERNOON SESSION](#)

27 spots available per session

## Earth Month in Tennessee

Join the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation as we celebrate Earth Day at events across the state! Visit our booth and learn about how you can help advance sustainability in Tennessee.

**Nashville**

[Earth Day Festival](#)

April 18 at Centennial Park

**Murfreesboro**

[Rutherford County's Earth Day Celebration](#)

April 18 at the Historic Downtown Square

**Memphis**

[Earth Day Festival and Fun Run](#)

April 18 at Shelby Farms Park

# CELEBRATE EARTH MONTH IN TENNESSEE

COME SEE US AT EVENTS AROUND THE STATE



## Tennessee Native Plant Month



Governor Bill Lee has officially designated April as Tennessee Native Plant Month. Take action and celebrate by adding native species to your outdoor spaces this spring.

Choosing native plants comes with many benefits:

- They're naturally adapted to Tennessee's climate and soil, making them easier to grow.
- They require less maintenance and fewer resources.

- They support local ecosystems by providing food and habitat for native pollinators and birds.
- They help prevent erosion.
- They filter pollutants and improve overall water quality.

If you're looking for native plants or want to learn which species are native to your area, groups like the [Tennessee Native Plant Society](#) offer helpful resources, including a directory of nurseries that specialize in native plants. You can also explore the [Tennessee Smart Yards](#) program for guidance on creating sustainable landscapes.

## Small Businesses



# YOUR BUSINESS AND EARTH DAY

Spring is in the air. Bees are buzzing, flowers are blooming, and people are enjoying the warmer weather. It's also a great time to think about how your business can support sustainability and celebrate Earth Day on April 22. Participating shows customers you care about a cleaner, healthier community. Even small actions make a big difference.

Here are a few ways your business can make a positive impact this Earth Day.

- Organize a small team to [host a neighborhood litter clean up](#)
- Partner with nearby businesses to start a recycling or composting project
- Join local Earth Day events and offer promotions that support sustainable choices
- [Landscape with plants that are native to Tennessee.](#)
- Reduce packaging waste
- Choose materials and appliances that use less energy

## Sustainable Recipe

Instead of buying premade condiments, try making your own using ingredients you may already have in your kitchen before they go to waste. Explore how to incorporate simple items like lemon, honey, mustard, buttermilk, pickle juice, and tahini into quick, flavorful dressings for your next salad or grain bowl. View recipes for easy [vinaigrettes and dressings made with leftovers.](#)



## News

[Walkable, Mixed-Use Development Opens in Maryville](#)

[Wilderness Gateway Park with Playscape and Pavilion Opens as Front Door to Knoxville's Urban Wilderness](#)

[WATCH: TDEC's Brownfield Redevelopment Area Grant Paves the Way for Tiny Home Development for Unhoused Veterans](#)

[WATCH: TDEC helps transform a Chattanooga brownfield into new baseball stadium](#)

[WATCH: TDEC part of collaborative project to bring back the Red-cockaded Woodpecker](#)

## Get Involved

### Events

[green|spaces: Lunch & Learn with Chattanooga Food Forest Coalition](#)  
Chattanooga  
April 8th

[Green Interchange: Plant a Tree for Tennessee](#)  
Statewide  
April 18th

[green|spaces April Spirits & Sustainability with The Land Trust for Tennessee](#)  
Chattanooga  
April 28th

### Training

[FREE: Green Building and Housing as Social Determinants of Health](#)  
Virtual

[Tennessee Forestry Association: Teacher Conservation Workshop](#)  
Middleton  
June 24th and 25th

[Backyard Composting Workshop with FREE Composter](#)  
Murfreesboro  
May 9th

# Conferences

[Tennessee Environmental Network: Show of the South](#)  
Chattanooga  
May 13th-15th

# Webinars

[Road Safety Champion Program: Road Safety Audits](#)  
Virtual  
April 29th

# Volunteer

[Tennessee Environmental Council: Assemble Wildflower Seed Packets](#)  
Nashville  
April 1st

[Land Trust for Tennessee: Glen Leven Farm Stewardship](#)  
Nashville

[Keep Knoxville Beautiful Volunteer Events](#)  
Knoxville

[Tennessee State Parks Volunteer Events](#)  
Statewide

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful: Clean Ups](#)  
Statewide

[Nobody Trashes Tennessee Clean Ups](#)  
Statewide

# Receive Funding

[Waste Tire Resue Project Grants](#)  
Deadline: April 15th

[Riding For Focus: Cycling Grant for Schools](#)  
Deadline: April 17th

[Community Impact Grant: Cycling Grant for Schools and Non-Profits](#)  
Deadline: April 30th

[East Tennessee Foundation: Wildlife Preservation Fund](#)  
Deadline: May 29th

[Tennessee Environmental Education Association: Mini Grant for Teachers](#)  
Deadline: September 1st

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Law Enforcement Grant](#)

[TDOT Litter Grant Program](#)

## Have something to share in *The Catalyst*?

With an audience of 40K subscribers, we're looking for content that helps residents learn more about sustainability and take action in Tennessee.

[CONTACT US](#)

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