

Boulder Worms March 1, 2010

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You can also find most of the content in this newsletter on my blog:  
<http://boulderwormcomposting.com>

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----- United Kingdom Barber Banned from Composting Hair

"Hairdresser Jeff Stone was told he was breaking the law because his clients' discarded locks were classified as trade waste."  
( <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthnews/7187937/Barber-banned-from-composting-hair-clippings.html> ) The issue appears to be ensuring "[business'] waste was not harming the environment". Here's the Blackburn with Darwin council page on trade waste. ( <http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.2187> )

I found this story to be really interesting, as it addresses the intersection between composting/alternative waste management and public health. There are additional complications because Mr Stone is running a business—if he was a private citizen, I doubt he would have had any issues regarding his composting habits.

At first, I thought this was just another silly government scheme. However, as there are health concerns regarding hair dyes ( as outlined here: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hair\\_coloring#Health\\_concerns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hair_coloring#Health_concerns) ), composting may or may not be the best way to deal with the substance. I don't know whether landfills or incinerators (the other main alternatives that I'm aware of) are better options. And whether folks should be putting such chemicals into their hair is another matter.

I have been composting some human hair for a while now, and recently ended the experiment by dumping all the hair into my worm bin. I did not give much thought about the chemicals that the hair might have had applied.

Have you had any experiences with government officials supporting/not supporting composting or vermicomposting in your area? I'd love to get a better feel for this complex subject. I'll sum up the comments and report back.

----- Worms and Aquaculture

Via Bentley at [redwormcomposting.com](http://www.redwormcomposting.com) ( <http://www.redwormcomposting.com/> ), I discovered the concept of vermiponics ( <http://www.redwormcomposting.com/gardening/vermiponics-system-02-09-10/> ). Basically, vermiponics is similar to aquaponics, but instead of using fish as the animal portion of that system, you use some kind of composting worm. Here's an introductory article talking about Bentley's experiments ( <http://www.mnn.com/the-home/gardening-landscaping/stories/vermiponics-adding-worms-to-hydroponic-gardens> ). As always, Bentley is investigating the fascinating properties of redworms, taking gorgeous pictures, and writing interesting articles.

Vermiponics is the kind of integrated system fascinates me (part of the reason I drew up a chicken chart for redworms ( <http://boulderwormposting.com/2009/01/18/chicken-chart-for-redworms/> ) ), so I went looking for other information. Someone has registered vermiponics.com ( <http://www.vermiponics.com/> ), but there's not a lot of information on that website.

Someone named Phill from Australia has posted some diagrams of vermiponics systems, a general waste management flow on his blog ( <http://ausearth.blogspot.com/2009/10/vaquaponics-bioculture.html> ) and a vermiponic specific diagram in a powerpoint presentation, starting on page 18 ( <http://www.slideshare.net/Ausearth/vermiponic-bio-recycling-presentation?type=powerpoint> ). He's also posted a video about it ( <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkca-rndonE> ). I listened to all 5 minutes of the video, which is, as he admits on the page, roughly cut. I think I learned more from the diagrams, though.

There also appears to be some discussion about vermiponics in at least one of the Aquaponics forums: here's a thread about using redworms for solids removal from an aquaponic system ( <http://www.backyardaquaponics.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=5345> ) and a general vermiponics thread ( <http://www.backyardaquaponics.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=4175&st=0&sk=t&sd=a> ).

I haven't had time or space or weather to experiment with this type of system. Do you have any experience? Does the idea excite you, or seem like a whole lot of fluff?

----- Feedback from Orange Peels Comment

Lois from RI ( <http://www.wormladies.com> ) chimes in: "I always put my citrus in my bins but also use lots of eggs and the shells may balance it off as I haven't found a problem with adding citrus."

If you have more feedback or comments on this issue, please feel free to email me or add a comment on my blog post: <http://boulderwormposting.com/2009/12/04/orange-peels-in-worm-bins/>

----- Thanks

Thanks for reading! Any comments or suggestions are welcome. Feel free to reply to this email or contact me using this form: <http://boulderwormposting.com/contact/>

Until next time,

Dan Moore  
<http://boulderwormposting.com/>

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