

# There's gold in those scraps

## Official encourages composting

BY RICHARD DICKON  
of Nutley Sun

Nutley's mayor is joining with local residents to spread the word that one person's leftovers can be everyone's benefit, both financially and in helping the environment.

Mayor Joanne Cocchiola said she plans to begin composting at her own home, and is spearheading a drive to get others in Nutley to follow, with the help of environmentally minded women from the township.

Members of "Live Well, Be Well" approached Cocchiola with the composting idea. "I think I will try to do it myself this winter, and will promote it throughout the township, with a link to our website," Cocchiola said.

She said composting cuts down on garbage tonnage by piling vegetables and fruits, all non-meat food waste.

"I'm committed to them to promote awareness," Cocchiola said. "We want to help people make healthy life choices, and we will have events to promote the ideas."

Karen Wallace of the Live Well group stated, "Do you compost? Anyone who has composted leaves, grass and kitchen scraps in their back yard knows it's a simple procedure that can be accomplished in a variety of ways. They also know that with very little cost or effort, the result is a yearly supply of soil-enriching material."

She added, however, because beginners are often confused by their options, Nutley-based "Live Well Be Well: A Coalition for Community Health and Sustainability" is compiling a database of people who can help others learn to compost by answering questions and participating in occasional demonstrations. Anyone interested in encouraging and helping their neighbors to compost can send an email message to [mail@livewellbewell.org](mailto:mail@livewellbewell.org).

Wallace said that, as for how her group started composting, there are basically two reasons why people compost.

First, it is to avoid using dangerous chemicals on gardens and lawns. Most of the commonly used yard chemicals are not only hazardous to humans and the

environment, but they also make plants and lawns weaker in the long run, she said. Compost, on the other hand, safely enriches soil by replenishing organic matter. It prevents the soil from becoming compact and clay-like, and makes whatever grows in it healthier and more resistant to drought, disease and pests, according to Wallace.

The second reason is to cut down on the amount that goes into the garbage, she said.

"It's such an easy way to lower town garbage collection costs," Wallace said. "It also reduces the amount of trash that has to be incinerated, which cuts down on local air pollution."

One question residents may have is how to keep young children from getting into the compost pile. Wallace said there are all types of composting bins. Chicken wire around an open pile is the type a family might want to have if they have young children or pets. There are also other types, including an enclosed plastic container.

"I use two large landscaper pails that are open at the top and have holes poked in the bottom," Wallace said. "One contains finishing compost that we aren't adding to anymore, the other is the one we're currently working on. A lot of people use the style that has a top that opens and a door at the bottom to remove finished compost. Children couldn't get into it. Those who compost on a large scale in areas where properties are very big might have a series of three wooden bins with slotted doors that slide up.

There is a link with some pictures of the various types, she said: [http://www.napi.ca/composting/6types\\_of\\_compost\\_bins.htm](http://www.napi.ca/composting/6types_of_compost_bins.htm)

According to its website, the group began in 2003 as "Eat Smart, Be Smart," a group of Nutley parents who want to see healthier foods served in the schools. It has since embraced related goals that would make any community a healthier place to live, the site states.

Some of the changes they are working for within the homes, businesses, schools and organiza-

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tions of the township include increased consumption of nutritious foods, particularly fruits, vegetables and whole grains, implementation of energy-saving and water-saving techniques and more reliance on renewable energy sources.

It also includes increased use of local and organic foods, expanded recycling and backyard composting, and reduced use of pesticides and other harmful chemicals, according to the website.

Any resident interest in any of those goals interest can find a place within the organization, send a message to [mail@livewellbewell.org](mailto:mail@livewellbewell.org) and be put on the group's email list.