



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article      October 10, 2016

### Free Presentation on Gardener's Gold: Compost by Lydia Holley

If you have questions about composting, or are interested in starting a compost pile, Henderson County Master Gardener Bob Erickson will be giving a free presentation on composting on Tuesday, October 18, 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Clint W Murchison Memorial Library, 121 S Prairieville Street, Athens.



What is an ounce of gold worth? These days, a lot. What is compost worth? To the gardener, a lot. Although most gardeners make compost out of materials that are free, they know that the finished product is so beneficial it's worth its weight in - well, possibly gold.

Compost benefits clay soil by binding with and enlarging the tightly packed particles that make clay sticky and heavy. This allows air and water to move through the soil, improving drainage and the soil's texture. Compost also benefits sandy soils in the same way. By binding together with the sandy particles, water is slowed from draining too quickly and improves sandy soil's texture.

Since compost is usually made from several types of materials, compost adds back a variety of nutrients to the soil. Studies have shown that compost can continue to supply nutrients to the soil for five years. During this time, compost will attract earthworms to your soil which can also benefit your soil.

Earthworm castings as well as compost can help improve your soil's pH by neutralizing the acidity or alkalinity of your soil. This can help your plant's ability to take up nutrients. The combination of added nutrients, proper soil pH and better soil texture will improve your plant's natural ability to fight against pests and diseases, so you will have a more beautiful garden with fewer problems.

How do you start composting? Is there a formula to keep the compost from becoming too dry or too wet? What do I do with compost that stinks? How long does it take to complete the composting process? There are a lot of questions gardeners have when beginning to compost, or when they have problems with their compost piles.

If you have questions about composting, Erickson will be happy to answer them during the presentation.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email [hendersonCMGA@gmail.com](mailto:hendersonCMGA@gmail.com) or visit [www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org](http://www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org).