



THE

# Gill Newsletter

SPRING 2023 Issue

## Disclaimer:

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## Town Hall

### Happy Birthday Grayce!

The Town wishes Grayce Perry a very happy belated birthday. Grayce celebrated her 98th birthday in February. Two months earlier, in an outdoor ceremony at Town Hall, Grayce was awarded the Town's Bicentennial Cane by the Selectboard, recognizing her at the Town's oldest resident.



### Welcome Tim

In March the position of Administrative Clerk was filled with the hiring of Tim Batchelder. Tim grew up in Greenfield, graduated from Greenfield High School, and went to GCC and Westfield State. He served in the Massachusetts Army and Air National Guards, and worked for police departments in Brattleboro and Leverett. He most recently worked for nine years as an Industrial Accident Investigator for the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents. He lives with his wife and children in Gill on the NMH campus.

Tim's main responsibilities include clerking for the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board, and catching us up on the backlog of Annual Town Reports. He has been working Tuesdays through Thursdays noon to 5 PM, and looks forward to meeting you on your next visit to Town Hall.

### Town Hall – Flood & Flooring

The below-zero temperatures on the weekend of February 4th-5th caused a heating pipe in the Town Clerk's office to freeze and split. When the ice melted water flooded across the floors of the Town Clerk's, Treasurer's, and Town Administrator's offices and soaked and dripped its way into the basement. While the event was horrific, fortunately nothing of importance was damaged or destroyed. We can be thankful Doreen Stevens, our Town Clerk, stopped by that Sunday afternoon to work on a few things with her husband Gary. Otherwise, the catastrophe would have been much worse. Thanks also to the three Selectmen, Charles Garbiel, Randy Crochier, and Greg Snedeker, plus Fire Chief Gene Beaubien, Firefighter Jake Whitney, and Town Administrator Ray Purington, who all



Check in with the Gill Website

[www.gillmass.org](http://www.gillmass.org)

for up to date news, announcements and contact information!





responded with Shop-Vacs to suck up the mess.

The Town's insurance is covering the costs of cleanup and restoration, and brought in a team from ServiceMaster to pack out the contents of the basement. Undamaged items are being stored in the pod next to the Town Common, and damaged materials, including water-logged ceiling insulation and the wood paneling walls of the former Assessors Office, went to a dumpster. More than 15 pieces of commercial-grade air-drying equipment were running 24/7 in the basement and first floor for two – three weeks to finish the drying process.

It was determined, however, there is still moisture trapped in the layers of the floor and subfloor. The next step, which starts Monday, April 24th, is to remove the asbestos vinyl tile flooring from the flood-affected areas. After that, any lingering moisture will be dried out, and then a new subfloor and vinyl tile will be installed.

For the duration of the flooring work, all Town Hall offices have been relocated to the second floor. The Town Hall will remain open for business, with access to the offices via the stairs located at the rear of the building. A doorbell is located at the back door for anyone who wants to be met outside.

Thank you for your patience, and we look forward to Town Hall operations returning to normal as soon as possible!

### **Annual Town Meeting**

This year's annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 22nd.

Stay tuned for an announcement of the time and location. The uncertainty with the schedule for the flooring work at Town Hall has caused us to wait a bit longer before finalizing the details.

### **Recycling Bins, Compost Pails, & Backyard Composters**

Recycling bins are again available at the Town Hall. The first one is free, and additional ones are \$5 each. Kitchen compost pails are also available free of charge at the Town Hall, with a limit of one per household. We just received a new supply of Earth Machine compost bins, and are available to Gill residents for a discounted price of \$25 each (regularly \$55 each). Payment can be made by cash or check payable to the Town of Gill.

## **From the Town Clerk**

### **Annual Town Election. One Vacancy**

The Annual Town Election will be held on May 15, 2023 from 10AM to 6PM 325 Main Rd. (Please note: elections are no longer held at the Fire Station.)

The last day to register to vote in the Annual Town Election is Friday, May 5th from 1 PM to 5 PM at 325 Main Road.

The offices on the ballot this year include:

**Selectboard, Sewer Commissioner,** three-year term:

Gregory Snedeker, incumbent

**Assessor,** three-year term:

Pam Lester, incumbent

**Cemetery Commission,** three-year term: Pat Hawkins

**Tax Collector,** three-year term: Thomas Hodak, incumbent

**Board of Health,** three-year term: Vacant

**Library Trustee,** three-year term: Megan Bathory-Peeler, incumbent

**Constable,** three-year term: Craig Gaudry, incumbent

**Constable,** three-year term: Fred O. Chase III, incumbent

**Constable,** three-year term: Fred O. Chase II, incumbent

**Tree Warden,** three-year term: Joseph Williams

Vote by Mail is available for the Local Town Election. Anyone interested in Vote by Mail can print an application off the Town website before the 10th of May and submit it to the Town Clerk. Ballots will be mailed to you. Voted ballots can then be put in the drop box or put in the mail. Any ballot received before 6PM on election day will be counted. Please read all instructions when voting.

The Town Clerk and all other offices have been moved to the 2nd Floor of the Town Hall until the repairs are made to the floor on the main level of the Town Hall. If you need assistance and do not want to climb the stairs, ring the doorbell at the back door and someone will come to assist you.

*Doreen J. Stevens, Town Clerk  
Office hours: Monday 9AM-4PM,  
Tuesday 9AM-1PM, Wednesday  
9AM-3PM, Thursday 3PM-6PM or call  
for an appointment 413-863-8103.*



## From the Energy Commission

### New contract for electricity rates!

#### MassSave incentives!

The Community Choice Power Supply Aggregation with 15 towns in Franklin County has gone back out to bid and is looking to renew the contract to purchase bulk electricity. Gill ratepayers who opted in to the aggregation pay \$0.10/kWh from July 2020 to Jan 2024 for electricity supply from Dynergy. Compared to Eversource's current \$0.21/kWh rate, Gill ratepayers have saved real money!

On April 24, Gill is hoping to receive favorable pricing for another 3 year contract. Due to the global energy situation, we are anticipating about \$0.14/kWh for the new electric energy rates.

Gill is hoping to choose a standard product of 25% additional Class I RECs to increase the % of green energy generation above RPS requirements that is lower or equal in cost to Eversource basic service.

If you opted out of the Gill Community Choice Power supply Aggregation, you will need to opt in to enjoy the current \$0.10/kWh and new pricing starting Jan 2024. To join Gill's Program, you can do one of three things: (Colonial Power is the broker for our aggregation. Dynergy is the energy supplier)

1. Visit <https://colonialpowergroup.com/gill/>, click the orange OPT-IN / OPT-OUT button, then provide the requested account information and submit the form;
2. Call Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1 and ask to be enrolled in the Town of Gill's Program; or

3. Call Dynergy at (866) 220-5696 and ask to be enrolled in the Town of Gill's Program

For any of the above, please have your Eversource bill handy. Lastly, if anyone is currently contracted with a different supplier, first confirm that you won't incur any early termination fees or penalties for leaving that supplier.

Another resource to lower your electric bill is the R2 or R4 Low Income Eversource discount. Applications are available in the lobby of Town Hall. You are eligible if you receive benefits from any of the following programs: SSI, TAFDC, EAEDC, Food Stamps, MassHealth, LIHEAP, Head Start, Free or reduced school lunch, Mass Veterans Benefits, DIC, WIC, and more! More info: <https://www.eversource.com/nstar/CustomerCare/Residential/DiscountRate>

How to reduce your energy use and electrify your home? Contact MassSave for the latest rebates and incentives as well as 0% interest Heat Loan. Free Energy Audits, rebates and incentives for air sealing, insulation, heat pumps, refrigerator, freezer, climate controls and more are available at [Masssave.com](http://Masssave.com)

## GMEF Annual Gala Returns

On Saturday April 29 the Gill-Montague Education Fund is excited to welcome the tribute band Faithfully for "An Eagles & Journey Experience". Faithfully will re-create the music of The Eagles and Journey with material from all eras of the two bands' careers, encompassing their biggest hits as well as fan favorites including: *Tequila Sunrise*, *Desperado*, *Open Arms*, *Don't Stop Believin'* and many more. The

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Janet Masucci 413-863-8694 [JanetMasucci.com](mailto:JanetMasucci.com)  
64 French King Highway, Gill, MA



show will be at the Turners Falls High School Theater at 7 PM.

**Advance Tickets \$30**  
At the Door \$35

Advance tickets are available at these Locations: Hillside Pizza in Bernardston; Weatherheads Convenience Store in Erving; World Eye Bookshop in Greenfield; Bobby's Hair & Nail Salon in Northfield; Freedom Credit Union, Greenfield Savings Bank and Scotty's Store in Turners Falls. They are also available on the GMEF website at [www.thegmef.org](http://www.thegmef.org)

Our collaborative effort with underwriters, corporate sponsors, major advertisers, and tier-givers have resulted not only in our Annual Fundraising Gala bringing quality entertainment to our communities but also making available more than \$126,840 for student enrichment grants.

*For more information about our Annual Gala, Tickets, and Student Enrichment Grants go to [www.thegmef.org](http://www.thegmef.org)*

## Memorial Committee

Greetings from the Memorial Committee. We invite you to attend our service this year on Sunday, May 28th beginning at 9:30 AM at the Gill Church where we have patriotic hymns and music, a Memorial Day address and end with a rose ceremony at the war memorials.

Committee members plant geraniums and replace flags in the cemeteries on May 25th at 8 AM. If anyone is interested in participating please let us know by calling one of the committee members. If that date and time are not convenient, we

may be able to arrange another time to accommodate as we have four cemeteries to do.

Our flags are starting to show some wear after having flown for six years now. We will be replacing the POW flag on the common and the American flag at the war memorials. Prices have increased significantly. If anyone is interested in donating toward replacements, donations may be made to the Gill Memorial Committee with a notation of flag account and mailed or dropped off at the Gill Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354. The street flags are approximately \$55 while the others are approximately \$65 - \$75.

Our committee meets about four times each year to prepare for Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. Anyone interested in participating on a committee that honors our veterans and service members is encouraged to join.

*Gary and Merri Bourbeau*  
(413)863-8613

*Doug and Elaine Smith*  
(413)863-3115

*Tony Zager*  
(413)522-6915

## Slate Library News

Slate Library is happy to welcome spring and gear up for summer. This is our second year of running a "Seed Library" and we have lots of amazing seeds donated by High Mowing and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. Just as traditional libraries enrich a community by providing a way to share books, seed libraries enrich the gardening community by allowing gardeners to share seeds. A seed

library encourages experimentation, affording local gardeners (or aspiring gardeners) a low-risk way to try something new. Have you ever wanted to grow kohlrabi, purple broccoli or tatsoi, but don't want to splurge on a packet of seeds? Come on in and check some out! We also have lettuce, tomatoes, butternut squash and peppers. Everything you need to start your garden off right.

This May, Slate Library has partnered with Gill Elementary School to offer a fun-for-all story walk. Outside the library you will see a story walk and art exhibit. Take a walk around the library and read *Carmela Full of Wishes* by Matt de la Pena, and view wishes drawn by first grade artists. If you see an artist outside the library, be sure to ask them about their wish.

The library is gearing up for a fun summer of reading activities starting in June. If you have a youngster in the house, come by and pick up a game board and win prizes for reading all summer long. Each Saturday there will be a creative art activity at the children's table. Activities range from watercolor painting to simple printmaking and cyanotype photography. Come for the books, then stay and play! The library is a cool haven on a hot summer day. We have so many amazing picture books and YA series, including *Shadow & Bone*, *The Trials of Apollo*, and *The Good Girl's Guide to Murder*.

*Library hours are Tuesday 2-6 PM, Wednesday 3:30 - 7:30 PM, Thursday 2-8 PM and Saturday 10-2 PM. Please reach out to us at [gill.slate.library@gmail.com](mailto:gill.slate.library@gmail.com) or (413) 863-2591.*



## Antenna Cloud Farm

Announcing the 2023 Season of the Antenna Cloud Farm Music Festival! Rooted in the genuine belief in the power of music as a source of hope, societal wellness and community resilience, Antenna Cloud Farm is a multi-faceted grassroots arts organization based in Gill, MA.

Kicking off the season is the **ACF Music Walk (July 1, FREE)**, a village-wide festival showcasing an array of innovative and virtuosic local artists, and celebrating local businesses and public spaces in Turners Falls/ Great Falls. Following the Music Walk are three shows at our home venue in Gill: **Maeve Gilchrist (July 14)**, a virtuosic Celtic harp player who has taken the instrument to harp to new, innovative levels of performance and visibility; **Sam Amidon (July 23)**, a world-renowned contemporary folk artist specializing in guitar, fiddle, and banjo; and **Steph Davis (July 29)**, a marimbist, arranger, composer, educator, and cultural activist. Be sure to mark your calendars or these events. Tickets for events go on sale in May.

This program is supported in part by the Gill Cultural Council, and we are grateful for their support. To learn more about ACF, visit our website [www.antennacloudfarm.com](http://www.antennacloudfarm.com) or follow us on Instagram @antennacloudfarm. We hope to see you at ACF this summer!

## Gill Cultural Council

The following organizations have events scheduled in the near future that we hope are of interest to Gill residents. These programs are partially funded by the monies set

aside by the Massachusetts Cultural Council to benefit each town and city. Please check the organizational websites for details.

### Gill Historical Commission

Lecture: The Deep History of Gill. April 29. Details: [gillmass.org/d/40820/Historical-Commission-Program](http://gillmass.org/d/40820/Historical-Commission-Program)

### Antenna Cloud Farm- here in Gill!

Several upcoming events in Gill and Turners Falls  
[www.antennacloudfarm.com](http://www.antennacloudfarm.com)

### L.A.V.A. (Local Access to Valley Arts)

On the Boards/Off the Shelf - staged readings.  
Various dates: [thelavacenter.org](http://thelavacenter.org)

### Hilltown Youth Summer Theatre Workshop

Program July 10- August 7  
Public Performances August 3-6  
[hilltownyouth.org/summer-workshop](http://hilltownyouth.org/summer-workshop)

### Pocumtuck Homeland Festival

Organized by Nolumbeka Project in Unity Park, Turners Falls  
August 5 from 10-7, August 6 from 10-5  
<https://nolumbekaproject.org/events>

### Deerfield Valley Art Association.

A series of lectures on the intersection of Art with Topics in Science, History, and Culture  
[www.deerfieldvalleyart.org](http://www.deerfieldvalleyart.org)

### Richie Richardson- of Turners Falls


Upscale Fashion Show- date TBA  
[richierichardsonfab.com](http://richierichardsonfab.com)

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## Four Winds School

The school year is wrapping up here at Four Winds School: we have just a little over a month left! This year students have studied local history, including a focus on the indigenous perspective of King Philip’s War, as well as earth and space sciences, including astronomy, meteorology, geology, and meteorology. These science and humanities topics are in addition to our other academic subjects including math, geography, Latin, reading, and writing, which students work on at their own level and pace in an independent learning environment.

In January we had our first ever “Winter Intersession” in which students took a break from our regularly scheduled academic programming and instead studied theater, which was a topic of their own choosing. Students studied directing, acting, and set design, and put on a production of “Reverse Hamlet” by George Ffiek. In another first, in May we will be ending the school year with individual Capstone Projects. Unlike the Winter Intersession which was a group initiative, during the last two



weeks of school each student will work on a large, individual Capstone Project of their own choosing. We can’t wait to see what they come up with and achieve during this time!

Four Winds School is currently accepting students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade for the 2023-24 school year. If you or anyone you know is interested in an alternative middle school education, please visit our website (FourWindsSchool.info) or send us an email at fourwindsteachers@gmail.com. Have a great spring season!

## HONOR ROLL

### Pioneer Valley Regional High School 2nd Quarter

- Grade 12**  
Highest Honors: James Staelens
- Grade 11**  
Highest Honors: Eben Brown
- Grade 8**  
Honors: Diego Lafitte

### Franklin County Technical School 1st Semester

- Grade 11**  
Honors: Britney Zager
- Grade 10**  
Honors: Josiah Little
- Grade 9**  
First Honors: Emma Little  
Honors: Taj Diaby

### Turners Falls High School 1st Quarter

- Grade 11**  
Second Honors: Noah DeLorenzo and Owen LaValley
- Grade 10**  
Second Honors: Sheni Ovalle Roblero  
Third Honors: Pamela Gomez

- Grade 9**  
First Honors: Vaughn LaValley, Caleb Lincoln and Kainen Stevens  
Second Honors: Christopher Halla \ and Miles Riley  
Third Honors: Dylan Brunault

### Great Falls Middle School 1st Quarter

- Grade 8**  
First Honors: Patrick Andrews

- Grade 7**  
First Honors: Madison Haight

- Grade 6**  
First Honors: Owen Zilinski  
Third Honors: Jordan Welcome

### Turners Falls High School 2nd Quarter

- Grade 11**  
Second Honors: Owen LaValley  
Third Honors: Noah DeLorenzo

- Grade 10**  
Second Honors: Sheni Ovalle Roblero

- Grade 9**  
First Honors: Vaughn LaValley, and Kainen Stevens  
Second Honors: Dylan Bruanult, Christopher Halla and Caleb Lincoln  
Third Honors: Angelina Tidlund

### Great Falls Middle School 2nd Quarter

- Grade 8**  
Second Honors: Patrick Andrews

- Grade 7**  
First Honors: Madison Haight and Alaina Halle  
Third Honors: Jonathon Holmes

- Grade 6**  
Third Honors: Bristol Stevens



# The Amazing Geology of Gill

presented by **Richard Little**

Professor Emeritus, Greenfield Community College

SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023, 1-3PM

GILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

Professor Little will reveal adventures in Gill's "deep history" from the glacial shores of Lake Hitchcock to the fractured middle of the Pangea supercontinent. Little will discuss drumlins, dinosaurs, rare Jurassic armored mud balls, and drifting continents. Gill's rocks and landscape record these diverse dramas through geologic time, making it one of the best places in the world to study geology!

SPONSORED BY THE GILL HISTORICAL COMMISSION WITH A MASSACHUSETTS AND GILL CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANT.

*The Gravestone Girls has been postponed from July 29 this summer to April 20, 2024 because of the repairs in Gill's Town Hall. The Gravestone Girls will talk about Gill's burial stones next spring 2024.*

## Watch out for ticks!

Spring is here and so are ticks. Ticks can transmit diseases to humans when they bite; the longer a tick remains attached to the skin, the higher the likelihood that it may spread bacteria that cause tick-borne illnesses.

When studied around 2018, more than 34% of local deer ticks tested positive for Lyme and more than 5% for anaplasmosis, the two tick-borne diseases occurring most frequently in the Franklin County region.

Although only deer ticks (aka black-legged ticks) can transmit Lyme and anaplasmosis, other ticks should be avoided because they can transmit less common diseases.

Luckily, there are many things we can do to prevent tick-borne diseases:

- When outdoors, stick to hiking trails, wear light-colored clothing (to see ticks) and tuck in loose ends.
- Make a habit of checking yourself, your children, and pets for ticks after coming inside. Think like a tick: ticks often hitch a ride after physical contact with brushy plants—start by checking feet, ankles, legs and groin, then work your way upwards.
- Use tick repellents, like DEET (designed for skin) and pre-treat clothing, including socks and shoes, with permethrin (not to be put on skin). Permethrin is invisible and odorless and stays effective in fabric through many washings. Using both repellents together is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

Find more prevention information at [mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov) and at [tickcounter.org](https://www.tickcounter.org)

If you have been bitten (the tick is attached to your skin), remove the tick with fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible, and pull with steady, even force. Wash the bite area and continue to check for several weeks; if you develop flu-like symptoms or a rash, see a doctor.

If you need to test the tick for tick-borne diseases, save the tick in a small, plastic bag. Log on to [www.tickreport.com](http://www.tickreport.com) and follow the mailing instructions. Identify ticks at <http://www.tickcounter.org>.

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## Spring 2023 “Clean Sweep” Bulky Waste Recycling Day

Franklin County Solid Waste Management District is holding the Spring 2023 “Clean Sweep” Bulky Waste Recycling Day on Saturday, May 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. The three drop-off sites are: Mohawk Trail Regional School at 26 Ashfield Rd. (Route 112 South); Northfield Highway Garage at 49 Caldwell Rd; and Whately Transfer Station at 73 Christian Lane.

Residents from any District town may bring bulky items such as tires, appliances, scrap metal, furniture, carpeting, construction debris, computers, televisions, propane gas tanks, and other large items. Materials will be recycled whenever possible.

Mattresses and box springs will not be accepted at this event. In 2022, the Solid Waste District established five permanent drop off locations for mattress recycling across the county. See this webpage for locations, pricing and hours: [franklincountywastedistrict.org/mattress-recycling](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org/mattress-recycling). Call the District office at 413-772-2438 if you are unsure if your mattress and box spring can be recycled.

There are charges for most items. Disposal fees, cash only, will be collected during check-in at each site. A complete list of prices for the most common items is at: [franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org). The price list will also be provided to participating town halls and transfer stations. Residents and businesses do not need to pre-register for the collection. Electronics are accepted at the event, but residents are also encouraged to recycle computer equipment and televisions at their town’s transfer station, or at Greenfield Transfer Station. Staples stores accept computer

equipment (no TVs) free of charge: call your local store for details.

Clean, dry textiles and books will be accepted for free reuse or recycling. Textiles must be contained inside a sturdy plastic bag. Textiles are now banned from the trash. Textile recycling accepts 95% of all textiles, including clothing or linens that are torn, stained, with missing buttons or broken zippers. Damaged textiles can be sold to manufacturers that make insulation or shop rags. Acceptable items include CLEAN & DRY clothing, shoes, and accessories; plus curtains, sheets, towels and stuffed animals in any condition (except moldy or wet). Books can be in any condition (except moldy or wet) and can be hardcover or paperback. No encyclopedias.

Bulky Rigid Plastics will be collected separately for a special recycling program; \$5 per load. Acceptable items for this special recycling program are limited to these items only: 5-gallon pails, plastic lawn furniture, plastic trash barrels, recycling bins, laundry baskets, storage totes, and milk crates. Bulky rigid plastic items must be empty.

For more information, see [franklincountywastedistrict.org](http://franklincountywastedistrict.org), or contact the District office at [info@franklincountywastedistrict.org](mailto:info@franklincountywastedistrict.org) or 413-772-2438. MA Relay for the hearing impaired: 711 or 1-800-439-2370 (TTY/TDD). The District is an equal opportunity provider.

### Home Composting

Spring is a great time to start a new home compost bin, or to improve your home compost system with spring cleanup of fall’s leaves, plants, flowers gone by and other garden waste. Composting food scraps

and yard waste can potentially save money for your household by reducing the amount of “pay as you throw” town trash stickers that you use. According to the MassDEP, food waste accounts for 22% of residential trash in Massachusetts, and compostable paper such as napkins and paper towels makes up 9%.

Applying your own homemade compost to gardens and lawns instead of purchasing bagged garden soils and topsoil can also save money. Finished compost is a soil amendment that can reduce the need to water gardens and lawns, improve soil structure, and add nutrients and minerals to soil. Composting organically based materials at home or at a local compost farm reduces climate-changing gases that are emitted from landfills, waste-to-energy facilities, and long-distance trash transport.

### Low-cost compost bins and pails

Composting is easy, and it can be even easier with effective, low-cost compost bins. Franklin County Solid Waste District sells “Earth Machine” home compost bins. The Earth Machine features a door in the bottom that can be opened to shovel out finished compost. Gill residents can purchase Earth Machine compost bins from the Solid Waste District for a subsidized price of \$25. To purchase subsidized bins, call the Solid Waste District at 413-772-2438.

The Solid Waste District sells “Sure-Close” kitchen compost collection pails for \$5 each. This 2-gallon pail sits on the countertop or under the sink to collect compostables before taking them out to the home compost bin or municipal compost collection. The pinholes in the tightly locking lid allow moisture to evaporate, which reduces odor.

## How to Compost at Home

In the kitchen, use a compost pail or similar covered container to collect fruit and vegetable scraps and peels, eggshells, coffee grounds and paper filters, bread crusts and more. It is not recommended to put the following materials in home compost bins or piles: meat, bones, poultry, fish, cheese, pet wastes, and oily foods such as peanut butter and salad dressing. In addition, “compostable plastics” are not meant to compost in home compost bins or piles; these materials are designed to break down in a higher heat environment that is found in commercial compost facilities.

When adding kitchen scraps to outdoor compost bins, cover the scraps with fall leaves or other carbon-rich materials such as finished compost from the bin. Covering the kitchen scraps reduces insects and odor and speeds up the composting process. Ideally, a home compost bin should contain about 75% “brown” carbon-rich materials such as fall leaves, brown yard waste, straw, used paper towels, ripped up egg cartons, paper bags; and 25% “green” nitrogen-rich materials such as food waste, coffee grounds, and grass clippings. Maple leaves and other autumn leaves are ideal for composting. Avoid oak leaves and pine needles; they break down slowly and can be acidic. Saving fall leaves in a covered trashcan or under a tarp makes it easy to add them to home compost bins all year long. The finished compost in your bin is another source of brown material that can count toward the recommended 75% carbon-rich materials.

The composting process needs oxygen; mixing or “turning” the pile with a shovel or pitchfork will speed up the compost process. Introduce

helpful microorganisms to your bin by adding a few shovelfuls of garden soil or finished compost. Add water as needed to make the contents as damp as a wrung-out sponge.

Compost is ready to spread on gardens and lawns when it becomes crumbly, dark brown or black, sweet-smelling soil.

## Municipal Compost Programs

In addition to home composting, a household’s participation in commercial or municipal composting can greatly reduce trash volumes. The food waste and other materials collected in these programs is sent to a commercial compost facility such as Martin’s Farm in Greenfield or Clear View Composting in Orange. These larger scale compost facilities go beyond the backyard compost bin by accepting items not recommended for home composting, such as meat, bones, cheese, compostable coffee

cups, and BPI-certified “compostable plastic” ([bpiworld.org](http://bpiworld.org)).

Municipal compost programs at 13 Franklin County transfer stations accept separated food and paper waste free from residents or permit holders: Bernardston, Charlemont, Conway, Deerfield, Leverett, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Shelburne, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately. In addition, any District resident, including those from Gill, can bring organic waste to the Greenfield Transfer Station, after paying the \$5 host fee per visit.

## Free Workshop! Composting Made Easy

With instructor Amy Donovan  
Saturday, June 3, 10-Noon  
Gill Elementary School

To register contact Janet Masucci at (413) 863-8694 or email [jmasucci@msn.com](mailto:jmasucci@msn.com)

# Composting Made Easy

- Easy how-to instructions
- Tips for success
- Demonstrations of indoor worm bin composting and outdoor composting
- Local resources
- Educational handouts and yes/no guides
- How to participate in municipal or commercial composting



The Solid Waste District manages recycling, composting, and hazardous waste programs for 21 member towns, including 17 municipal transfer stations. Over the past 16 years Ms. Donovan has set up dozens of classroom worm bins, started 25 school compost programs, and launched 13 municipal compost programs.

**FREE  
WORKSHOP**