

## COLUMN

## Compost: Get's rid of waste and doesn't have to be dirty

by Jane Johnson

Rot. Composting is all about it. Most people don't even know too much about composting. Often their knowledge is dominated by pictures of stinking piles of fly-infested decay in a backyard, driving the neighbours crazy! Hopefully, this article can clear up a few misconceptions.

First of all, composting does not need to be smelly or messy. Any smells can be controlled by putting an equal balance of wet and dry refuse into a composting container, thus ensuring a good equilibrium of nitrogen and phosphorus matter.

Kitchen garbage would ensure a good supply of wet refuse, while leaves, grass, or even small pieces of ripped paper would ensure a good supply of dry refues. Without a nasty smell, composting becomes a far more pleasant activity.

Composting is not a messy thing to undertake either. The containers used for composting are often made of sturdy materials that don't allow leaking and maximize composting effectiveness. For single people, or for those in apartments, there are apartment-size composters available.

If you don't want to buy a composter you might even want to establish an exchange of refuse and the resultant fertilizer with a neighbour who does have one. Think of how your plants would thrive with ultra-rich fertilizer. And think of the fewer trips to the curb that you'd have to make with your garbage.

Here are a few more tips that could help you on your way to composting: first of all, if you're composting outside be careful about leaving meat scraps lying around: you don't want to attract unwanted animals.

Secondly, try not to use Toronto worms for your composter, since they're used to sandy soil conditions and won't work very effectively.

Finally, remember to turn the material in your composter over once in awhile in order to ensure proper heat distribution. This aids the composting process.

Composting makes an excellent complement to recycling efforts for the environment and offers direct benefits. If you should find yourself producing too much compost, ask friends if they'd like some for their gardens or houseplants. No doubt they'd be grateful to receive some free fertilizer.

If you'd like some more information on composting, just call (416) 469-2089. Good luck!

## Media portrayals not grounded in reality

by Sue Pennypacker

I've noticed a strange trend in the local media. In spite of the fact that women are becoming more integrated into the so-called public sphere, their problems are largely ignored. For the most part, the media judges women by a male standard.

Traditionally, female achievements are relegated to the lifestyle section of the various forms of media. Stories about typically male-dominated areas are more often found in the business section or in the news sections. Essentially, the language use and the layout of different articles reflects the position of women in our society.

An excellent example of the media's failure to acknowledge

### The dissent of (wo)man

women occurred recently in one of the Toronto newspapers. In a story about the effect of the budget on working people, this newspaper featured a white middle class male laborer. He is supposedly representative of working people across Canada.

While it is true that the entire middle working class is suffering due to the effects of the recession, rising taxes and cuts to social programs, a man cannot adequately represent the plight of women.

In the same article, it was

noted that this man is a member of a union. Unfortunately, many women work in fields which are not unionized. Women are, therefore, often left unprotected in the labor force. By using a white, male, union member to illustrate the plight

Unfortunately, the media chooses to validate only the traditional roles of women.

Furthermore, this validation takes the form of a hierarchy. So-called female tasks are usually considered to be less important than typically male tasks.

### A man cannot adequately represent the plight of women

of the average worker, this article failed to acknowledge the condition of many working women.

We are not living in a world in which women perform only conventional tasks. Women play many parts in our society.

I'm not asking for over-representation of women in the media. I am demanding the realistic and humane representation of women in the media. In short, media portrayals of people have to be grounded in reality rather than in tradition.



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