



“ Compost: The Movie ”

David the Good

\* FULL TRANSCRIPT \*

Hosted By Marjory Wildcraft  
[www.TheGrowNetwork.com](http://www.TheGrowNetwork.com)

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## Home Grown Food Summit

### Transcript – David the Good – Compost: The Movie

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Hello, and welcome to The Home Grown Food Summit. This is Marjory Wildcraft, your hosting guide. I like to vision as being up on the top of a mountain at a summit of all things, looking down into a really busy and productive valley and getting a peek into the backyards and small farms and gardens of all these amazing people who are really producing a ton of food and medicine. And we're going to pop down to that side of the valley where David The Good is, David Goodman. And I got to tell you a little quick story about Dave. He's a blogger for The Grow Network and he and I often have a lot of interaction back and forth. Dave, one last summer had a land race going with these Tatume squash, and at the end of the summer when he had harvest them, he sent me a little envelope full of the seeds and he said, "Hey Marjorie, you got to check out this squash. It's really awesome." And he sent me the seeds and what Dave didn't know was that I also have land race going with the exact same variety of Tatume squash. So, what I did is a joke is I put a full-grown squash in a box and mailed it back to Dave and said, "Hey Dave, those seeds were amazing. I planted them in the ground and look what happened."

Anyway, this guy is crazy and he will show you how to compost everything. I mean, really everything, all the disgusting stuff. As well as all the good stuff, but he has really great techniques for, easy, how to do it simply. Dave's video last year was by far one of the top favorites in the whole summit and that's more of a reason that we haven't back for sure. Let me give you a little background on him. David The Good is a naturalist, a part time scientist and a hardcore gardener, who's grown his own food since 1984. Check that out. At age five he sprouted a bean in a Dixie cup and he hasn't stopped growing since. Dave is the author of four books, *Compost Everything: The Good Guide to Extreme Composting*, *Totally Crazy Easy Florida Gardening* and *Create Your Own Florida Food Forest*, and his latest Amazon bestseller is *Grow or Die: The Good Guide to Survival Gardening*. Dave currently has over 20 intensive beds and over 100 fruit trees, and a series of ongoing experiments and in-progress ranging from cross species grafting, to producing a better pumpkin for the South. I think that was the one that he and I were exchanging seeds on. Anyway, you can catch more of his experience at the [survivalgardener.com](http://survivalgardener.com). He also again blogs for The Grow Network and we love having Dave around. Let me let you go with Dave you're going to really enjoy this one.

I'm David The Good author of *Compost Everything: The Good Guide to Extreme Composting*. It's obvious that we throw out way too much stuff. I once estimated that about 50% of what goes in our trash, could have been recycled into compost or into soil. Today I'm going to show you how to compost, without worrying about nitrogen and carbon ratios, without worrying about big stinky piles, without worrying about turning but composting the way nature does it, and I'm going to show you some stuff you've probably never seen before, and teach you how to put just about everything back into the soil. Let's do it. If you look at a forest, it's continually dropping leaves and limbs, birds perch up into trees and they drop their droppings. Animals die on the forest floor; animals leave their droppings on the floor. There is a massive amount of biomass in a forest. Biomass is all the organic growing living material and it's continually falling and its recycling, and the forest floor, is always being replenished with new material. This is why a garden like the Back to Eden garden, if you've ever seen the Back to Eden film with Paul Gautschi, he talks about how his garden just gets richer every single year because he's not tilling the soil and the organic matter isn't being burned off by the wind and by the sun and by erosion and everything else.

It's continually dropping forest matter down on the ground. If you were to look at this layer right here, you could see that from the surface where the leaves fall, and then down lower, there's a layer of organic matter that goes down

quite a ways. And then it starts to go into the sub soil where it thins out and you have mostly mineral material rather than organic material. If you recreate this by simply dropping materials around trees, you can take paper plates, you can take kitchen scraps, you can take anything that rots well and is nontoxic, throw it around the base of a tree and if you think it looks ugly, you can throw some more mulch on top of it to hide it, and just let it rot into the ground and it will feed directly in place. You don't have to make a pile and turn it; you don't have to worry about ratios. Nature doesn't worry about ratios. Things just drop on the ground and they rot. It may take time. I mean something like a stick takes a while to rot into the ground, but it's being slowly consumed by fungi. The fungi are turning it into soil, and eventually it'll become part of the ground again. You don't have to think it over too much. You just have to throw stuff on the ground and let it go. That's really the secret. The way nature makes compost, is to throw things on the ground, just throw it on the ground and it's going to become compost.

Now, obviously you might not want to take a dead possum and throw it on the ground, because it's going to get carried off and dragged around your yard and it's going to stink and it's going to bring the buzzards in. It'll get composted certainly, but it may not get composted where you want it. There's other things you have to do, if you want some of that nasty things, kitchen scraps that are going to be stinky and that stuff. You want to compost that in a different way. But with your leaves, mulch, sticks, paper plates, cardboard, things like that, that can just rot right on the ground. As long as your HOA doesn't catch you. Hey, you want to see something disgusting? Oh, come on you know you want to see it. Come here. See that? Can you smell that? Yeah. You know what that is? That's a barrel of solid gold. That my friend is homemade fish emulsion. Do you have any idea how much this stuff sells for? I made it myself. And I'm going to tell you how to make it. Are you ready? Okay, first of all, you have to have some friends that will bring you buckets of rotten fish guts. That's what I have. My friends Mark and Rick came over one day with a couple of five-gallon buckets filled with fish guts. Because I appreciated their gift, I said, "Thank you very much." Instead of just throwing it on the ground or maybe spattering it around the front of a neighbor's house as a prank, I decided to make fish emulsion out of it. First of all, I put the yucky rotten stinking fish guts, down in the bottom of this barrel. Then I added in some molasses to give it a little sugar and get it kicking. I also threw in some moringa leaves and some shredded wood to add a little more carbon. You don't need to do this but I did it anyways. Just figured I'd get a little extra something. Then you throw in water, and you let it sit.

This has been sitting here for at least a year, stirred up real good every once in a while. At first the smell is incredible. Now it pretty much just smells like a wharf. Take a gallon or so of this, mix it in with maybe five gallons of water, or even make it thinner than that. You can go around and water your trees, water your plants, water your gardens and all of that mineral fertility that was in the fish and in the guts and every bit of nastiness, plants absolutely love it. They go crazy and it gives them the micro nutrition that they need to thrive. Otherwise, all that beautiful fish guts would have gone to waste. We don't want fish guts to end up in a landfill, do we? No. Recycling into this, It's like ... What is that? \$500 worth of fish emulsion? Pretty awesome for an afternoon [inaudible]. This here is one of my favorite composting tools. A machete. Now, people often complain that they don't have enough compost. You never have enough stuff to compost. You might take 10 tons of stuff and then by the time you end up composting it all in your pile, you end up with a bucket of compost. You say, "What happened? I never have enough compost." So, I deliberately grow plants that create compost. These here, that you can see over my head. These here are *Tithonia diversifolia*. It's a massive perennial sunflower. And it's one of my favorite plants because it makes a lot of biomass, it pulls up a lot of micronutrients and it's loaded with phosphorus.

I grow these things from cuttings, I plant them all over my food forest, and then I chop them down a couple of times a year, and use them for compost. At this time of year, they're in full bloom, the butterflies love them, the bees love them, and it's getting close to winter so I want to start dropping them as mulch. There is a pear tree right back there. We're going to go set that pear tree free, and we're going to mulch and compost around it at the same time. Let's do it. There we go. That's mulched and fertilized, composted in place. Took me about five minutes to chop down these sunflower canes and put them around here. If you live in a place where these giant sunflowers don't grow, don't worry

about it. Grow Jerusalem artichokes, grow comfrey. Even the invasive species that people are perpetually trying to get rid of, are a great source for mulch and for fertility for the soil. The reason a lot of these plants grow so well is that they're great at pulling up fertility. The most pain in the neck invasive trees, are often great pioneer species for bad ground, they get in, they invade, they grow really fast. People try to cut them down and kill them. Why not plant a fruit tree next to it and cut the top off of that invasive tree, over and over again and throw it around the base, let it rot, let it feed the soil, you're growing compost right next to the tree. That's compost you don't have to buy and that's fertility that that tree worked really hard for, and it pulled up from all around your yard with its root system. You're taking all the hard work that it just did, and you're giving it to one of your beloved fruit trees. It's really simple. And it's the way nature does it. We're just doing it in fast forward by dropping it over and over again, rather than waiting for fall every year for things to fall to the ground, or for a limb to be broken off of a tree and end up on the forest floor. We're doing it real fast by growing stuff that grows really quickly and then dropping it multiple times a year, and making lots and lots of humus and compost right in place, right where it's needed.

Dead simple. Hey, it's fall. This is the time when nature renews itself by dropping lots and lots of compost on the ground. Lots and lots of leaves. Yet a lot of the time we waste this fertility by going around with a rake or lawn mower and bagging it all up and getting rid of it. Why not use it for compost? Or why not leave it where it is? Right where it's supposed to be around the base of a tree, to feed the soil. Let's talk about what I talk about in my book *Compost Everything, dealing with Stupid Worthless Trees*. You see this tree; this is a sweetgum tree. This is considered a stupid, worthless tree. A lot of folks don't like this tree, they consider it a trash tree. And it grows quickly and it drops a lot of little spiky things that if you're barefoot, you step on them and you get hurt. It also makes little suckers that pop up all over the place. Yet, there's a lot that's going on in this tree that you don't necessarily think about. First of all, this tree is pulling in nutrition from perhaps as much as 50 or 60 feet away from the trunk, maybe even further. It's gathering nutrition probably from my neighbor's yard, and it's bringing it over here, and then in the fall, it's dropping it on the ground. Another thing this tree is doing, is it's playing host to all kinds of species, including the Luna moth, which is one of the most beautiful moths we have in my neck of the woods. This tree is actually a compost factory. Now let's say this tree is in the way, like you want to plant, say an apple tree here and this thing is providing too much shade and you've got a small yard and you got a tree and think, "I'm going to get rid of it." A lot of people will call a tree company, have the tree hauled away, or they'll cut the tree down, and then they'll burn the tree. Don't do that. There's a lot better things you can do with it. If you do call tree company and have them take the tree down, have them leave the pieces of the tree, have them chop it up for you, or even better, have them mulch it and leave you a big pile of good mulch, but I'll show you what I've done with some of the trees that the neighbors have cut down. I'm probably becoming a little bit predictable, but this is what I did with the logs. I threw them on the ground. This was an oak tree that was in the way, it had a rotten out base, had it removed. Now it's sitting here at the edge of one of the beds for my food forest, and it's turning into soil.

Not only that, it's got little turkey tail mushrooms on it, which are medicinal mushroom. These are old. These are one of our native varieties or cousins of turkey tail. You could use that, you can actually take those logs down and put oysters or shiitakes or one of those mushrooms in there, and you get the benefit of having it turned into soil and produce your food at the same time. But ultimately this is going to produce food anyways, because it's feeding plants that are around it. It's being the fungi in the soil and the fungi are feeding the plants. These yucca plants here or cassava are being fed by this stuff rotting into the ground. Any future trees that I plant here will be fed by this stuff rotting into the ground and what's underneath it ... Come on up close here. We have got life down here. It's a place for worms and ... Look at this. Look at how beautiful that is. If you were to buy that, that would be expensive. You can't put a price on this beautiful stuff. There's all kinds of little things, those little round balls that are in there that you can probably see. Those are frass or insect droppings. And the insects are chewing in here. There's beetles and millipedes and who knows what else, and they're turning this all into soil. Rather than carrying this away, it's making something totally beautiful that you know is chemical free and safe because you harvested it out of your own yard. Trees do a lot of work. Just harness that work, turn it into soil, and you'll be feeding the ground for probably decades to come. Now this may not exactly be

composting, but here's another thing you can do with stupid worthless trees. This little gum tree came off of the base either probably from one of the roots sending up a sucker, or from a seed. And I noticed this gum tree was growing real fast. And I didn't really have a fruit tree that I wanted to put in here at the time.

But I was thinking, this thing would make a pretty good trellis for some yams. These are African yams growing all over the top of it. You can see the little bulbs that they make. These are edible, and they also make great big roots below the ground, which are also edible. The sweet gum tree wasn't doing any good for me. I cut the top of it off and I composted it. You can see that the tree is still alive, that's sweet. This is called pollarding a tree. If you have a tree that has a lot of vigorous growth and you cut it in the winter, when it's asleep, it'll grow back again in the spring and take off from wherever you cut it off previously. You see people doing this to crape myrtle trees all the time to make the blooms at a certain level. You can do that over and over again with a tree that would normally be a pest, and then use it for a living trellis, and it creates compost at the same time, because every time you take the top of it off, you can either use that wood to feed a little rocket stove, or you can use it to feed your mulch, or you can just burn it for whatever cooking you want to do if you want to do a campfire or something. But I love this thing for a yam trellis, and I think if I have trees pop up in the yard, I start mowing around them, and I just don't let them get so tall and bushy that they're going to shade things out. If they start shading things out, cut the top off in the winter, use it for something else. You could put a ring of bamboo stakes around this right to the middle and tie them up there, and make it a bean trellis if you wanted to. You could grow just about anything on it. You could even put a birdhouse on the top and let the blue birds be in the middle of your food forest. But me, I'm growing yams. Big weird yams. Beneath the tranquil surface of this idyllic scene, lurks hidden danger.

Speaker 3: The rich feces of these noble beasts may hide certain death for your garden. Using their manure is like playing Russian roulette with a life of your plants. New and powerful herbicides are now being sprayed on pasture land, hay fields and grains. These herbicides don't dissipate rapidly. Instead, they may stay in the ground for years before breaking down. Even worse, they are taken up by grasses, then consumed by animals and passed right into their manure. And if those deadly droppings go in your garden, your plants are toast. Incredibly well known handsome and famous gardening author David The Good explains.

David Goodman: A few years ago, this happened to me. My new role of thorn less blackberries started twisting. My papaya trees developed cupped and distorted leaves. And my tomatoes, beans, tobacco and eggplants were destroyed. I lost over \$1,000 worth of plants that year. Not to mention the loss of food for my family. What happened? I got some manure from a local dairy, and they'd sprayed an herbicide called Grazon on their fields to control blackberries, pig weeds and other so-called weeds. It doesn't kill the grass, but it sure wrecks everything else. It's in manure, it's in hay, and it's in straw. It's all over the place. I can't tell you how many people have told me they've had their entire gardens destroyed, sometimes for years after applying some supposedly safe manure. Another friend had her organic perennial gardens wrecked after adding some rotten straw as mulch.

Speaker 3: If animals are grazing on sprayed land or eating any hay from the feed store, or if there's bedding straw mixed into your manure, you're at risk. No hay, no straw, no manure is safe, unless you know every aspect of its production, from broad in feed to pasture practices, run away.

David Goodman: What we have here is a very cool way to compost. This is called a banana circle. The concept is really simple. Bananas are heavy feeders. They like a lot of water. Put them in a circle around a pit where you put compost, manure, whatever else you have. You can take anything from the beef stew that I always like to mention, to beans to even raw sewage it doesn't matter. You dig a pit. So, you go about three feet deep. You just start piling stuff in there, you make it basically a compost pit. Then you plant your bananas around the edge of it and then around the bananas you can plant other plants.

What are the plants beyond bananas that my friend Kathy planted in her banana circle? It's a lemon. This is a cold hardier variety called Meyer. We're up here in North Florida and it gets cold. But she's also put these banana trees right along the south wall of this house, so they get some of the thermal mass overnight and it prevents them from freezing. And as you can see, they're actually fruiting. These bananas actually are a little small and it's starting to get close to freezing. So, I'm going to take the end of these blooms off. You can also use this as a vegetable but it's a pain in the neck to do so we never do it. But by taking the end of it off, we're going to encourage it to make more fruit rather than more blooms, and ripen those suckers up. My friend Joe Pierce, who grows a lot of bananas has also said that peeing at the base of a banana tree is a great way to fertilize it. However, this is a family friendly film. Bananas will eat just about anything you give them. If it's high in nitrogen, if it's stinky, if it's disgusting, whatever else, throw it in the middle here, and you just cover it over with some rough leaves. Even the banana leaves as they start to dry out and they fall and the blooms fall and all that stuff, just throw them right in the center and just keep covering over and over and over again.

You're going to have incredible banana trees; you're going to be composting at the same time. You're not going to have to worry about carbon nitrogen ratios or turning or anything else. You're turning your waste directly into bananas. That's cool composting. I'm standing in front of a big pile of fallen trees. This is also at my friend Kathy's house. This big mess here is going to become a beautiful garden one day. This is called Hugelkultur. And basically, it's a northern European idea, where you take pile of wood, you cover it over with some dirt, the wood starts to rot in the middle, it becomes compost inside and it also becomes a reservoir for water. So long term in this sandy soil, for decades, this area once it's covered over will be a mounted garden that's pretty much self-irrigating and self-feeding. I'm going to show you one that Kathy finished earlier this year, and you can see how beautiful it is. Earlier this year, this was an ugly pile of sticks. My friend Kathy keeps bees, so she decided to plant it with a bunch of wild flowers and edible things and all kinds of beautiful stuff. There's everything from pollinator plants, to salad greens, to small fruits on here. There are pawpaws, there are gingers, there are celosia and there's a lot more. And it's just going to get better year after year. And as you can see, it's already beautiful and this was only planted a couple of months ago. As those logs in the inside soak up water and rot, just becomes more and more and more fertile. This is much better than cutting your tree down and having the tree company haul it away. Look up Google Culture online. Go check out permease.com and see what they've done. There's some amazing stuff that you can do with fallen wood, rather than throw it away or just burn it. Including making a beautiful garden that'll feed your bees and feed you.

This here is a little simple compost tumbler. A lot of folks like these things because it takes some of the work out of composting and it's also good for a small space, you can seal it up, open it up, throw in some more stuff, seal it up again, turn it around. It handles the compost creation. The thing I don't like about them is that the capacity is really small. By the time you get to the end of a compost tumbler, you really don't have a lot of compost. It works well, but personally, I'd rather just throw it on the ground [inaudible] spin it again. It is satisfying to spin it; I wonder if I could stand on there and ... No, I'm not going to do that. The script says the next thing I'm supposed to do, is talk about worm composting. My friend Kathy also made this. If I'm the king of composting, she would definitely be the queen of it. She made this multi bin system and put worms in it. Eisenia Fetida I think as the name of the worm. They're called red wigglers or tiger worms because they have little stripes, they're little red guys. They are very efficient composters. They don't smell and she keeps this in her kitchen. Let's take a look inside. One up here. These beautiful little worms. Now the great thing about worm castings, is it's super rich. It's full of beneficial bacteria and fungi. Just like adding yogurt to your digestive tract, adding worm castings to your garden feeds the soil and gives it the good, life ... micro life that it needs to have. Worms don't like the light so they tend to retreat away from it. See down here, she's got shredded paper and cardboard. Look at all those worm castings. These are beautiful. We're going to feed these guys. Hold your container, recycling, very similar to composting. Find a spot in the corner here. Give them all this nice sloppy stuff. And you'd be surprised at how fast this disappears. Banana peels, bits of pepper. Just cover it back over.

The worms are nice dark spot and these guys are going to get in there and they are going to absolutely devour it. You don't have to have something beautiful like this to compost with. I mean they make everything from high end worm bins with all kinds of trays and you keep moving the trays around, and the worms work their way up and then you get these perfect finished trays with no worms in them, down to just take a feed trough or what I did, I took an old dishwasher, drilled some holes in the bottom for drainage, and put a container underneath it. Now the reason you want a container underneath it is to catch the worm tea which is what they call all of the moisture that starts to drain out after the worms have eaten and chewed and eaten and chewed. A lot of the moisture comes out, it's basically worm leaks. And then, that becomes some of the best liquid fertilizer you could ever add to your garden. If you have orchids or if you have ornamentals or if you have vegetables, just about anything will benefit from worm tea. You could probably drink it yourself. No. Probably not. But you put some drainage on the bottom of something and you put a container underneath it, you catch the worm tea, you dilute it with water and then you spray it as a foliar feed, or you can pour it around plants or you can soak your orchids in it or whatever you want to do with it.

Later on, to harvest out the worm castings, I would just take them and put them out on a tarp and start sifting through them, picking the worms out. And the worms keep going towards the center to get away from the light if you do it on a sunny day. So, you can keep sifting it open, they keep going towards the center and eventually you have a whole bunch of worm castings that you can use in the garden. And if a few worms make their way into the garden, well, who cares, they're going to help right? Worm composting doesn't have to be expensive; you can pretty much do it for free. It's just getting the worms it's usually going to cost you unless you've got a friend that's already got a bin. In that case, just go get a handful [inaudible] and their population will grow to fill the bin over time, so long as you keep them fed every week or so, and you keep some good shredded carbon material in there, even your shredder in your office. Office paper works well. Soak it in water, couple it up, throw it in there, throw in a handful of worms, throw in some coffee grounds, throw in some kitchen scraps, you're going to have some good worm compost over time. Just another cool way to do it.

Speaker 3: Some of the most despised creatures on the planet are also the best composters. Take for example, the vulture. They've been called the best workers the Department of Transportation has; they give will work for food a whole new meaning. Another creature which tirelessly works to return organic matter to the soil, is the ant. Though unwelcome at picnics or on the kitchen counter, they tirelessly carry away everything from dead beetles, to cracker crumbs. Flies, or more specifically their loathsome little maggot babies, also break down rotten organic matter like it's going out of style. These maggots are the larva of the soldier fly, a master composter in its own right. Perhaps the prettiest composting creature also feeds on the most disgusting of meals. This dung beetle is working hard to bury a dog dropping. That's one less for us to step on. Each of these creatures has been perfectly designed by the creator to dispose of waste and keep us from being buried in stinking horrors. Rather than hating them, we should celebrate them. Perhaps a giant statue of a maggot would be appropriate, or a commemorative coin featuring a vulture. Though as a human composter, you may think you're in lowly company. Just remember that your efforts should be valued right alongside that of the vulture, the ant, the fly and the dung beetle. Because without composters, the whole globe would probably look something like this.

David Goodman: Well, I'm doing one of my favorite jobs, which is pulling up the sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes got so far out of control this year, I don't even know where they started from. I like that. I'm going to have to come out here with a broad fork and just tear through this whole bed. But at the end of it, I'm going to have big piles of vines all over the place. You see all this stuff, and we're getting close to freezing, and these are going to die anyways. Normally, you might take these things and throw them in the compost pile, put them on top where they're going to dry out and they're not going to end up re sprouting and taking over your pile, depending on how mild your climate is.

What I like to do, is just take them right out of the garden and put them around one of my peach trees. Let's go do that. Now, I've been throwing all kinds of waste around these trees for a couple of years now. These trees are only

three years old. I started them from seeds. And the thing about seedling peaches, is that they're subject to nematode damage. Peaches on their own roots and nematode infested soil, often have a hard time, so usually they'll turn around and graft them onto a nematode resistant rootstock. However, compost helps drive out nematodes. They don't like high organic matter and they don't like the fungi that move in. There are some fungi that will actually eat nematodes. So, by continually dropping organic matter right at the base of these trees, I'm hopefully staving off the nematodes. And so far, judging by how many peaches we've gotten, it's working. Come here and take a closer look. Okay, so we've got slime mold here on the surface, we threw down some compost potting soil to just cover the mess. But if you dig down in here, you've got egg shells, paper plates, peelings, leaves and all kinds of stuff. It's a lot of rough stuff. And the peach tree really loves it. We're pretty much just making compost right around the peach tree.

And again, if you wanted to grow your own compost, I could plant a couple of those giant sunflowers back here, or some comfrey or something else, and just chop them down, form right around the base of this tree. And I could even do the same with all the cassava that's growing behind this tree. At the end of the season when I harvest the roots. That's some really easy composting, so why not turn your old sweet potatoes, into peaches? Why not? (Singing). In my video last year for The Home Grown Food Summit, I showed you these hot tub pods, they're basically just reclaimed hot tubs for water storage. But I use them for compost making machines as well. And what I've done is gotten some fast-rapid growing aquatic plants like these. I don't even know what they are, but, when they come out, they'll rot and they'll feed the soil, and they'll drop nitrogen. Do this with duckweed, all kinds of aquatic plants, you can also do it with the much-hated water hyacinth. Water hyacinth is one of the most invasive plants on the planet and aquatic system. The State of Florida spends millions of dollars every year trying to eradicate it. However, it's loaded with nutrition and it's loaded with nitrogen. And as soon as you take it out of the water and throw it on the shore, it dies. It starts rotting, right where it is and it turns into compost. If they would just turn around and start scraping this stuff out and turning it into compost, they could probably make money off it. You can also feed it to cattle, people can even eat it when it's prepared properly, but we're not going to get rid of the water hyacinth, why not just grow it in big tubs, or pond systems and turn it into some compost. It's going to be around, just a thought. This by the way, if you're a federal agent, is not water hyacinth. This is some duckweed like plant.

I don't know if it's a giant duckweed or something else but it floats and it duplicates multiple times, it also makes a really good compost. It's a good activator because it's a high green. So, if you have a big pile, you start throwing this stuff in there in between layers of leaves, and it will rot and get that pile hot. And I can scrape half of this pond of this stuff and throw it in the compost pile, probably about every month or so, and it all grows back. It duplicates itself. Pretty cool. Grow your own compost. If you're to read regular composting guides, it's pretty much like a big list of don't do this. Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't do that. Don't do this. Don't do that. I find that really irritating. Because just about anything organic can be returned to the soil. I mean, they'll tell you, don't compost bread. Don't compost cheese, don't compost meat. What did nature do before we came up and wrote this big list? All that stuff got composted. Everything can be returned into the soil. So, I'm going to show you how to safely compost meat and paper, and bread and whatever else you want to compost. This is dead simple, and I've borrowed this method from the Native Americans and I read about it in Steve Solomon's book, so I call it melon pits, because I use this method to grow melons and to grow squashes in the summer. I'm going to show you how I do it.

First thing you do, is to dig a pit about three feet deep. Now we have a hole. I have a paper plates, and watermelon rinds and scraps. Everything from spaghetti to who knows what. Oh yeah, doesn't that look delicious? Then what I did was, cleaned out freezer. They even know what this is? I think it's ... Oh it's bones. Some sort of bones for stock. All right. Great. Awesome. No [inaudible] I don't know we still had these. Look at that. Those are chicken feet. That's cool. I don't know what we were going to do with these. Backscratcher? Now just to top it all off, some milk. Spoiled ... Look at it. It's chunky milk. Those are called probiotics. Oh yeah, come on. In come out. Some chunky bits. It's like cottage cheese in there. Now for those people that say you can't compost a pizza, you can't compost a placenta look, it's not that hard. All this stuff rots. All you got to do, fill it in. I smash it down a bit. I don't want it to be too close to

the surface, because I don't want an animal coming and digging it all up. But if you know anything about plant roots, watermelons for instance, in loose soil, their roots can reach down to eight foot. When you pull it up you only see that little bit of roots, there are microscopic roots that go way beyond. They just keep going. Tiny little root hairs, all over the place. They will find this. Whatever you plant will find this, and I actually like to do this usually a couple of months before I plant. So, this stuff has some time to rot down into the ground, but that right there, is going to be my melon pit. And you want to mark it and if you want to, you can plant it right now. The roots will find it. I did this in Tennessee for the first time. We planted Hubbard squash on top of it. Through in everything from goat organs to paper plates, hunks of wood, all kinds of junk leftover from the kitchen.

I planted it. At first the plants look like every other plant in the garden. They just look normal, yellowy green leaves, doing all right. Then one day I noticed they were starting to turn deep green. And then they went crazy. They covered the garden area. They fed themselves, they needed hardly any water. They got their roots down into that fertility and they went crazy. And that area, was fertile for a couple of years afterwards. Not my idea. Natives came up with it. And I'm just borrowing it because it works. And it also helps you get rid of all the stuff that normally you're not allowed to put in your compost pile. Forget that. You can put anything in a hole. One other thing I didn't tell you about these pits. You can take hunks and log, and bury them in here too. I have a friend who actually took a posthole digger, dug a hole jammed a phone book down in it, planted seeds on top of the phone book. Then he did another hole, and he just put the dirt back into the hole and he planted seeds on top of that. Seeds that were planted over the phone book grew like crazy. And you can probably guess why? Because they were able to look up fertilizers. No, not really. The reason they grew better over that phone book, is that phone book filled full of water when he watered it, and it became a source of irrigation for those little plants. If you put some wood or some paper or whatever else down in there and it gets wet, sopping wet, the seeds that grow on top of it are going to be able to find that moisture, just like they'll find a compost that I put down in there. They're going to grow like crazy. This method is really cool. Particularly if you have a big lawn area. You cut an area where you take the sod out. You make one of these pits, you put in fertility just in that area, instead of having to fertilize a whole garden. You do just that area. You let the vines grow, they grow all over the grass, they start to run the grass over, but they're feasting on the good stuff that's down in there.

And works as a great ground cover. You can even probably do it with some green manure crop by just planting and letting it take over piece by piece, melon pit by melon pit. I pulled some sweet potatoes out of here about a month ago, and before the weeds come in and take over, I want to make this area beautiful for next year. So, I have a mix of seeds right here. You got to see these things up close. There are beans in there, there's herb seeds in there, probably some peas in there. All kinds of different seeds have gotten from both bins, got wildflower seeds. A massive diversity of life. The seed packets that I don't use, threw them in here. The old seed packets with lower germination rates, Dollar Store does a sale at the end of the year when they put bins of seeds out for a few cents apiece. It all goes in here. And then I can take these seeds, and I can add life back on top of the ground. Soil doesn't like to be uncovered. Put some plant life on it or you put some mulch on it. It will be a lot happier. So, for the little bit of time we have left before it freezes, the warm stuff will grow and put some roots in the ground which will turn into compost. Cold weather stuff, the brassicas that I've mixed in here will grow right through the winter. In the spring, probably some more warm season stuff will come up. All I have to do with this beautiful mix of seeds, is just rake it in. People do green manure mixes with clover and rye and field peas and all kinds of different things. I don't sweat it too much. I just mix a wide variety of things together, including nitrogen fixers like beans and peas. I've even done tree seeds mixed in with wild flowers and shrub seeds and cassias seeds and all kinds of other things and done them in food forest projects.

Anything to get a diversity of plants growing on the ground, a lot of roots into the soil, and something covering up the sand. Because, the organic matter disappears real fast. If you get tired of looking at it, you want to plant another crop, till it under, turn it over with your fork, plant again, cut little circles in it, plant right into the circles, keep the plants you want to keep and eat, leave the other ones alone. And you get to play like Mother Nature and throw thousands of seeds around, and just see what happens. And it's exciting, it's beautiful. There's so many wildflowers that come up

because we do this. It's cool. I enjoy doing it. Oh, you're still here. Well, I hope you enjoyed all the composting. I hope you've seen that composting can be really drop dead easy. Doesn't have to be a big system with all kinds of bells and whistles. You don't have to worry about your ratios, just going to throw things on the ground, returning back to the soil, be creative and thinking about ways you can put organic material right back in, and use that fertility for your plants rather than throwing it into the waste stream. I also want you to check out my book, *Compost Everything: The Good Guide to Extreme Composting*, published by Castalia House. You can find that on Amazon. I appreciate your time and wish you all the best.

Marjory Wildcraft: Well there you go, composting everything compost the movie. What's your favorite style of composting? I have to say personally I am hugely enamored with chop and drop like just do it, let it drop right there. Or even better yet, trees that drop their own leaves in the fall and I don't have to do anything. Those are my favorites. I have a funny another little quick funny background story. So, David The Good is David The Good, we have another Grown Network member and content creator named Captain Dave, who often does a lot of stuff on weather prediction for all of us to learn how to predict the weather better.

And Captain Dave was talking to me he goes, "Hey, if his name is David The Good, could I be called David the naughty?" Yeah right? You can Captain Dave whatever. Anyway, to stay in touch with David The Good, that button to the right, click on it and you will get to download a copy of David's compost. The notes basically for most of this movie, it's a guide to composting. I really recommend almost anything that David put out, he's really coming up with great stuff. Also highly suggest you head over to David's YouTube channel, David The Good, and he regularly does live YouTube events where he answers questions directly. And plus, he's got a zillion other even funnier videos, so click that button to the right and stay in touch with David The Good. Also, down below, you can pick up the whole solid package and you can own this presentation as well as all the other presentations at this summit, and get to support a growing movement. Actually, The Grown Network is the largest community of people who grow around our food and make our own medicine, awesome group to support so, buying the package really helps support this work. This is Marjory Wildcraft, come join us for another really fun, crazy educational presentation at The Home Grown Food Summit.