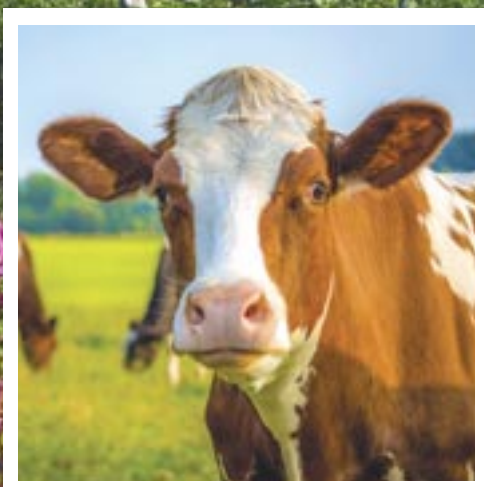


Sibley Shopper

Farm & Home

Spring Guide 2020



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A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

The Sibley Shopper

April 5, 2020

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The role of technology in agriculture

Metro Creative Connection

Modern industry is driven by technology. Advancements in technology have changed how business is conducted, with some industries undergoing dramatic changes since the dawn of the 21st century.

While agriculture might not be the first industry people think of when reflecting on the changing nature of industry, The National Institute of Food and Agriculture notes that modern farms are vastly different than those from a few decades ago.

Farmers have long relied on technology to make their operations as efficient, productive and profitable as possible. Precision agriculture, which refers to technological advances designed to propel agriculture into the modern, computerized and information-based world, is helping the agricultural sector become more profitable and efficient while also improving safety and making agriculture more eco-friendly. In addition, the NIFA notes that the



modern agricultural industry employs technology such as robots, temperature and moisture sensors, aerial images, and global positioning systems.

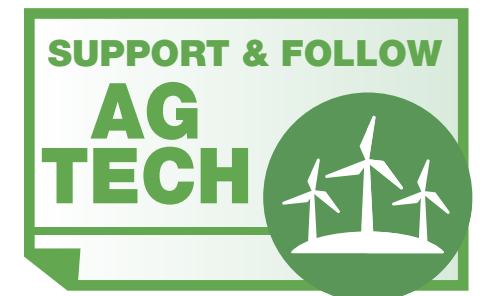
If it sounds complicated, that's because it is. For example, modern sensors can detect soil conditions, potentially producing hundreds of

readings per second. These sensors help farmers know the best possible time to plant seeds so they can reach their full potential. That improves both the efficiency of modern farms as well as their output.

The NIFA also notes that agricultural technology has reduced waste. For instance, thanks to agricultural

technology, farmers no longer have to apply water, fertilizers and pesticides uniformly across entire fields. Technology has shown that farmers can simply target specific areas or even treat individual plants differently. That saves time and allows farmers to use only minimal quantities of water, fertilizer and pesticides. In addition, according to the NIFA, employing agricultural technology in this fashion leads to higher crop productivity and reduces runoff of chemicals into rivers and groundwater, thereby reducing the farm's impact on local ecosystems.

Modern farms are technological marvels where various technologies are being employed to produce crops more efficiently and safely than ever before.



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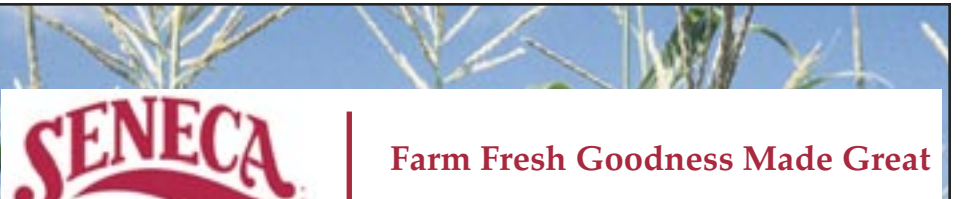
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What can and cannot compost

Metro Creative Connection

Avid gardeners know that compost can add vital nutrients to soil used in gardens, container plants and lawns. The fact that compost is so versatile and nutrient-dense may not even be its most admirable quality. Made from items used in and around the house, compost costs just about nothing to produce. The raw materials that make up compost come from organic waste. These can be disposables from the garden and kitchen, as well as other areas around the house. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, yard trimmings and food scraps add up to 20 to 30 percent of the municipal solid waste in the United States. Turning waste into compost not only helps the landscape, but also the planet.



Compost is relatively easy to make, and there are scores of materials that can be put into compost. But it is just as essential to know which ingredients cannot be used in compost.

Compost is relatively easy to make, and there are scores of materials that can be put into compost. But it is just as essential to know which ingredients cannot be used in compost.

Okay for compost. Most organic materials, or items that were once living, can be used in compost. Plant-based items used in cooking, such as potato peelings, carrot skins, banana peels, cocoa hulls,

coffee grounds and filters, corn cobs, apple cores, egg shells, fruit peels, kelp, and nut shells, can be added to compost.

Other items from around the house, like unused kitty litter, hair, shredded newspapers and cardboard, leaves, flowers, paper, pine needles, ashes, and sawdust, can be successfully added to compost. Stick to items that are not treated heavily with chemicals.

Should not be used in compost Inorganic and non-biodegradable materials cannot go into compost. These are items like plastic, glass, aluminum foil, and metal. Pressure-treated lumber, although a natural material, is treated with preservatives and often pesticides that can be harmful if they leech into the garden.

The small-gardening resource Balcony Garden Web indicates

coated or glossy printed papers, such as those from catalogs, magazines, wrapping paper, marketing materials, and business cards, should not be added to compost piles because of the chemicals and inks used in these pages.

Planet Natural Research Center says to avoid pet droppings from dogs and cats. Animal products like bones, butter, milk, fish skins, and meat, may decompose and start to smell foul. Maggots, parasites, pathogens, and other microorganisms can form in the compost. These materials also may attract flies and scavenger animals. Plus, they decompose very slowly.

Any personal hygiene products should be avoided because they are tainted by human fluids and that can pose a health risk.

While weeds are not harmful in compost piles, there is the risk that seeds can germinate and then infiltrate garden beds when the compost is used. The same can be said for tomato plants and some other hardy fruits and vegetables.

Compost is a winner in the garden and around the landscape. Learning which ingredients can and can't be added to compost piles is useful for any gardener.

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The danger of mowing your grass to short

Metro Creative Connection

Spring marks the return of many things. Trees and flowers begin to bloom again in spring, while warmer temperatures are welcomed back with open arms. Grass also begins to grow again in the spring. That means it's not too long before homeowners have to dust off their lawn mowers and get to work. Those who don't necessarily enjoy mowing the lawn may be tempted to cut their grass very low, as doing so can mean longer intervals between mowing sessions. However, mowing grass too low can have a very adverse effect on a lawn.

- Cutting grass too low can injure the grass, creating what's essentially a domino effect of problems to come. Injured grass will focus on its recovery efforts, thereby making it vulnerable to other issues.
- Cutting too low promotes weed growth. Injured grass is vulnerable to invaders, including weeds and insects. Weeds and insects can at-



Mowing grass too short can have a very adverse effect on a lawn. Affecting future growth and even the color of your lawn.

tack grass as it recovers from injury, and before homeowners know it, their lawns are overcome with a host of problems.

- Cutting too low allows crabgrass to thrive. Crabgrass needs ample sunlight to grow. By cutting grass too low, homeowners may unknowingly be promoting crabgrass growth. Crabgrass is unsightly and can rob surrounding grass of the moisture it needs to grow. So lawns cut too low may not only lose their lush appeal thanks to the unattractive appearance of crabgrass, but also because areas surrounding the crabgrass patches might turn brown due to lack of water.
- Cutting too low can stress the grass. Cutting too low also makes lawns vulnerable to summer heat. Without blades tall enough to block some of the summer sun, grass can quickly succumb to summer heat, leading to dried out, discolored lawns.



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Agriculture and the economy

Metro Creative Connection

Though it's easy to look at the tech industry and think this increasingly influential sector is what makes the world go round, something closer to the very core of the Earth may be what's driving your economy.

The agricultural sector plays a strategic role in a nation's economic development and prosperity. From the earliest days, agriculture has been heralded as playing a crucial role in North American culture. Farmers who grow produce and raise livestock for meats and other products have long exemplified what it means to work hard and take initiatives to be self-sufficient.

The symbiotic nature of agriculture and the economy is noticeable when examining the ups and downs of each. This is because food production and the potential of agriculture extends beyond the fields and local food stands. These



The agricultural sector plays a strategic role in a nation's economic development and prosperity.

resources impact supply chains and other markets. A strong agriculture base influences other employment sectors like food manufacturing, biotechnology, hospitality, machinery building, and much more, while a weak agriculture can adversely affect those sectors.

While it can be difficult for residents of developed nations to visualize agriculture's effect, one only needs to turn to impoverished and developing nations to see just how big an impact agriculture can have on an economy. Agriculture provides food and raw materials, eventually creating demand for goods produced in

non-agricultural sectors. Also, food provides nutrition that can serve as the foundation of a healthy nation. Earning a living in agriculture strengthens purchasing power, which fuels other markets. Eventually, farming can pave the way for development, including roads, markets, shipping services, exporting, and many other sectors.

Agriculture is an important economic building block. An especially important sector, the agricultural industry, when supported, can contribute greatly to sustained economic growth.



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Get ready: Early Spring landscaping

Metro Creative Connection

During the cold months of winter, many people stare longingly out of the window dreaming of spring and time spent outdoors. For those with green thumbs, images of tending to the garden and other aspects of their landscapes no doubt dominate such daydreams.

Draw inspiration from those budding crocuses and daffodils pushing through the last remnants of snow and employ these tips to prepare for the upcoming gardening season.

- One of the first steps is to apply a pre-emergent weed killer to get a head start knocking out weeds that can plague the lawn during the growing season. Killing weeds at the roots early on can mean far fewer hassles in spring and summer, and may prevent new generations of weeds from cropping up each year.

- While it may be tempting to take a prematurely warm day as a sign that spring is in full force and purchase a bunch of annuals, it's better to know the last of the possible frost dates



(check "The Farmer's Almanac"); otherwise, you may waste time and money planting flowers or vegetables only to have them zapped by another frosty day.

- Amend the soil so that it is the right consistency — just crumbling when lifting it. Soil that is too muddy after spring thaw can harden, making it difficult for plants to flourish later on. Speak with representatives at a local lawn and

garden center about which types of amendments you can add to the soil in your particular area to enrich it.

- Lawn and garden experts at The Home Depot suggest filling in bare patches of lawn now by mixing a few shovelfuls of soil with grass seed. Then apply this patch to the bare areas, water, and continue to care for the area until the spot fills in.

- Spend a day in the garage or shed tending to the lawn mower and other gardening equipment. Clean all tools and ensure that everything works, repairing parts as needed.

- Give outdoor entertaining spaces a good scrubbing, clearing away dirt and grime that may have accumulated over the winter. Use a leaf blower to blow away any leftover leaves.

- Check if the front porch, railings or decking need painting and/or staining. Tackle these projects when the weather is cooler so everything will be ready for those peak spring days.

- Think about any annuals you might want to plant in the landscape this year that will complement any existing shrubbery or perennials. Come up with a theme so that the entire yard is cohesive.

Before homeowners know it, winter is gone and it is time to once again enjoy long days spent outdoors. Get a jump start on spring lawn prep as soon as you can.



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The various benefits of farm-to-table

Metro Creative Connection

Few things are more satisfying than biting into a fresh tomato right from the garden or seasoning a meal with herbs picked from a windowsill greenhouse. Restaurants recognize the value of such experiences, and more and more are relying on locally sourced products in their kitchens.

The farm-to-table movement is not new, but it has gained momentum as consumers become increasingly enamored with the flavor and environmental impact of locally sourced foods. The National Restaurant Association found that farm-to-table food was one of its top 10 trends for 2015. Furthermore, the group says that one in five consumers are willing to pay more for local food, and 41 percent admit that locally sourced ingredients influence their decisions when choosing where to dine. Newcomers to the farm-to-table dining experience may not understand all the fuss surrounding this popular trend. The following are some of the key benefits of farm-to-table.

- Peak freshness and ripeness: Local produce ripens on the plant and can



be harvested at the last possible minute before it turns up on a plate. This helps ensure that it contains the highest amount of nutrients and flavor, according to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Food that has to travel further is often picked well before it is ready, ripening on the way to stores or other vendors.

- Better for the environment: Food that needn't travel far before reaching diners' plates saves roughly 500 gallons of

diesel fuel to haul produce a distance of 1,500 miles. This conserves fossil fuels and prevents harmful emissions from entering the atmosphere.

- Supports neighboring farms: Supporting farm-to-table restaurants and other eateries keeps business local in two different ways. It not only benefits local restaurants, but it also directly supports neighboring farms, fisheries and other suppliers.

- Accessibility to seasonal choices: Farm-to-table eating provides a wide variety of in-season foods. This can translate into tastier foods because they are grown and harvested during their optimal growing season.

- Reduces factory farming: According to O.info, the informational resource powered by Overstock.com, farm-to-table and local farming can reduce reliance on large, profit-driven corporations that may focus on maximum production over animal health and welfare. Local farms may be more inclined to treat their animals well and institute sustainable practices.

- Learn about the community: A person might live in an area and never know that a local vineyard is in the vicinity or that a producer of straight-from-the-hive honey is nearby. Exploring farm-to-table resources can open people's eyes to local businesses doing great work in and around their communities.

Farm-to-table is a popular movement that people are embracing for various reasons.

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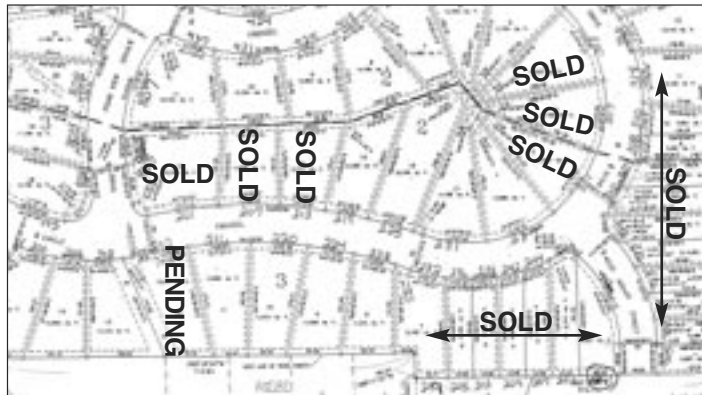
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By: Paul Harvey From his address to the 1987 AFBF Convention.

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So God made a Farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk the cows, work all day in the field, milk cows again, eat supper then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board."

So God made a Farmer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to wrestle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to await lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon, and mean it."

So God made a Farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt,

and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an axe handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make a harness out of hay wire, feed sacks and shoe straps, who at planting time and harvest season will finish his forty hour week by Tuesday noon and then, paining from tractor back, will put in another 72 hours."

So God made a Farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain, and yet stop in midfield and race to help when he sees first smoke from a neighbor's place.

So God made a Farmer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bales, yet gentle enough to wean lambs and pigs and tend to pink combed pullets; who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadowlark. It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, breed, and rake and

disk and plow and plant, and tie the fleece, and strain the milk, and replenish the self-feeder and end a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church. Somebody who would bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing; who would laugh and then sigh, and reply with smiling eyes when his son says he wants to spend his life doing what dad does."

So God made a Farmer.



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Myths about grilling and barbecuing debunked

Metro Creative Connection

Grillmasters and pitmasters work hard to produce mouth-watering fare. Many may develop secret recipes, rubs, sauces, and cooking techniques all in the name of flavorful food.

Certain myths about grilling and barbecuing have prevailed through the years. Such misconceptions may discourage newcomers from picking up their tongs and spatulas. Setting the record straight about common grilling myths can be just what people need to embrace cooking foods over an open flame.

Myth #1: Hosting a barbecue is the same as cooking barbecue.

Fact: Barbecue is the process of cooking foods slowly with low heat, typically in a smoker. Having a barbecue is an informal backyard party where foods cooked over a grill are served.

Myth #2: You can tell the temperature of the grill by placing your hand over the grates.

Fact: Everyone reacts differently to heat, so the best way to gauge temperature is by using a thermometer.

Myth #3: Grilled chicken is done when the juices run clear.

Fact: Even well-done chicken can form juices that are pink-hued. It's from a



Setting the record straight about common grilling myths can be just what people need to embrace cooking foods over an open flame..

protein called myoglobin, according to the book "Meathead: The Science of Great Barbecue and Grilling." Use a cooking thermometer to learn when poultry is safe to eat, typically at 160 to 165 F.

Myth #4: Marinating is best for grilling and tenderizing.

Fact: It seems that marinades really do not penetrate much beyond the surface of the meat and can keep the outer surface of the food wet, preventing searing and browning. Rubs and salts can be more effective at adding flavor. Serve a dipping sauce for additional flavor if people desire.

Myth #5: Light up the whole grill for best cooking.

Fact: Temperature control is a key component of effective grilling and barbecuing. Having two temperature zones — direct, radiant heat for searing, and an indirect zone for grilling meat evenly and preventing burning — can make food more tasty.

Myth #6: More smoke equals better food.

Fact: When cooking, faint wisps of blue smoke are better because blue smoke is made of tiny invisible particles and gases created by small, hot, fast-burn-

ing fires. White smoke generally comes from smoldering wood that is starved for oxygen, states the cooking site Food52. All of that white smoke can affect the flavor of the food.

Myth #7: Oil the grates to prevent food from sticking.

Fact: This may or may not work, depending on the temperature of the grates when the oil is applied. A better method is to oil the food, which will be cold so the oil will keep from burning and cracking.



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