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Compost Pile

Produced by Mimi George-Kent

Where most people in Altadena, California have a two-car garage, Tim Dundon has a 40-foot high pile of, well, crap.

Dundon believes, “The idea is to take everything that is life and turn it into piles of power.”

Tons of manure that Dundon picks up daily from a nearby stable, along with plant clippings and your everyday organic waste, makes for quite a compost pile. He has been feeding this “heap” since 1973.

“The ingredients are all just natural things, grass cuttings, leaves, sticks and twigs, chicken feathers, all the stuff that nature creates has gone back into it,” says Dundon.

Why compost? What is the message?

“There are a lot of people who are starving, have no resources. Resources can be created out of the life process that can keep people prosperous, happy and keep them out of trouble,” adds Dundon.

So what exactly is composting?

Bacteria working overtime converts organic waste to nutrient-rich dirt. Dundon likes to refer to it as “a bio-movement”, death turning back to life.

California could use a big bio-movement. According to the California Waste Management Board, we throw away 16 million tons of garbage annually, 40% of which could be composted.

The fire department says unless they hear complaints, they are leaving the pile alone. Dundon's compost has a lot of fans in the neighborhood, including Jules Dervaes' Family.

The Dervaes' are urban homesteaders who farm every inch of their one-fifth-of-an-acre lot, and one of 40 households where Dundon makes weekly deliveries.

Aside from a \$40 delivery charge, Dundon gives it away for free, and he donates truckloads from his pile, located just north of Los Angeles, to inner city garden projects.

For many, Dundon's creation is just a big garbage pile, but as the innovative bio-engineer himself likes to point out, "To the smart people they see that garbage turns into resources."