

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 7 Wednesday, June 4, 2014



Cynthia Brian's June Gardening Guide ...read on page D13

Lamorinda Home Composting: A Diverse and Growing Practice

By Sophie Braccini



Norm Paulsen transfers the compost in his vegetable garden.

Photo Sophie Braccini

With 545 Lamorinda families certified as composters, a growing number of residents are finding the practice good for their vegetable and ornamental gardens. All of these families have different practices, from a simple single pile on the ground, to elaborate multi-bins systems, and being certified gets them a little discount on their garbage bill. But, foremost, they do it to be part of the natural cycle of life, death, and rebirth in the garden.

Norm Paulsen has been composting for years in his Lafayette garden. For him, the practice is a normal part of gardening, a process he's been involved with since grammar school. His vegetable garden is extensive, and next to it is a compost pile in its simplest form: a heap on the ground delineated on three sides by wood siding. "We drop all our vegetable scrap in the pile, as well as green waste from the garden," he says, "then I cover it with wood chips and animal bedding provided by my neighbor, who raises llamas and alpacas." Paulsen has a pitch fork next to the pile and he turns it regularly before adding the result to the garden when fully composted.

"This is one of the key elements of composting," says Eric Fromer, "knowing when the compost is ready to be used."

... continued on page D4

