

# Can paper plates be composted?

Will paper plates compost adequately for garden use?

R.W., Terrell

Yes, as will many paper products. My only concerns with paper are some of the inks used for printing on them. Most contaminants will be destroyed by the composting process, but if you have a concern about paper or other ingredients, do not use the compost on food crops.

I like small plants, and I recently purchased a bonsai. The problem is that we have a cat that also likes such things, so the plants need protection.

Would these small plants grow in an aquarium with a mesh or screen over the top? R.L., Belton

In general, most plants can grow in containers such as aquariums if the soil moisture is properly managed. It is very easy to

## ORGANIC ANSWERS



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overwater in such tight environments.

Organic fertilizers would be essential; synthetic fertilizers cause salt buildup in the soil.

I recently moved to a new home that has Copper Canyon daisies in the planting beds. What kind of care and feeding do they need? R.H., Waco

This perennial, also known as *Tagetes lemmonii* and by other names including mountain mari-

gold, should be sheared in early to midsummer every year so that it is not floppy in the fall.

Enjoy the fall color. After a freeze has killed the top, the plant should be cut back to just above the soil line and covered with shredded tree trimmings. The foliage will bush out in the spring.

I have an infestation of mistletoe. Could I spray a little bit of Roundup herbicide on the mistletoe while the tree is dormant? D.M., Denton

Avoid all toxic pesticides including Roundup, which is much more problematic than advertised.

What works on mistletoe are physical removal and following my Sick Tree Treatment. (See Resources.) Eliminate stress on the tree, and the mistletoe eventually will dry up and die.

I have read that barley straw will keep algae from growing in outdoor water tubs. Is this true? L.S., Justin

Barley will work, but whole ground cornmeal works as well or better and is easier to obtain. Just toss a cupful into each tank.

If the green color returns, use cornmeal again. You can buy whole ground cornmeal at many nurseries and feed stores.

## RESOURCES

ONLINE: dirtdoctor.com for free organic-program handouts

RADIO: KSKY-AM (660), Saturday 11 a.m. to noon and Sunday 8-11 a.m. www.ksky.com.

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MONDAY-SATURDAY 8:00AM - 5:30PM  
SUNDAY 10:00AM - 5:00PM

# Start seedlings where it's warm: indoors

By RICK ROSEN  
Staff Writer  
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## CHORES

Not much will grow outdoors in winter. But winter is a good time to plant vegetables — indoors.

Get a head start on spring planting by starting vegetables from seed indoors. If you normally plant transplants in the spring, you'll save money with transplants you grew yourself.

Here are some vegetables you can grow from seed now. Included is general information, from Texas Cooperative Extension Service, on how many weeks it takes to grow into transplant size:

- Cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower:** 5 to 7 weeks
- Cucumber:** 2 to 3 weeks
- Eggplant:** 7 to 8 weeks
- Lettuce:** 4 to 6 weeks
- Onions:** 8 to 10 weeks
- Peppers:** 7 to 8 weeks
- Squash:** 2 to 3 weeks
- Tomatoes:** 5 to 6 weeks
- Watermelon:** 2 to 3 weeks

You can grow seedlings in shallow containers such as egg cartons, foam coffee cups or milk cartons, as long as the container is at least 3 inches deep. Punch holes in the bottom to let water drain.

Give seedlings room to develop. If they are crowded, they could fail once you

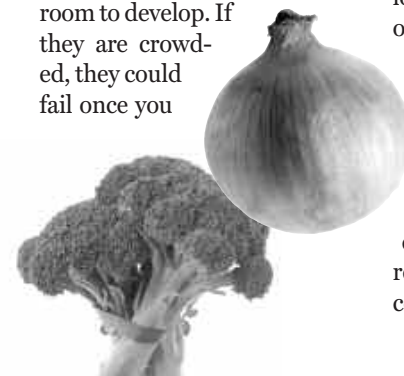
transplant them. Plant more seeds than you want plants, because seeds' germination rates are unpredictable. Sacrifice seedlings by removing them from the starter pots or transplant the seedlings to individual containers once the first true leaves appear.

If the danger of a freeze is over (March 16 is the average date of our last frost), seedlings are ready to transplant when they grow a set of strong-looking leaves.

Vegetables that like cold weather are available as transplants now. A sustained freeze that lasts for days or a hailstorm could damage or kill them, but it's more likely they'll not only survive the season but flourish. Most nurseries and garden centers have numerous cold-tolerant vegetable transplants in stock, including asparagus, horseradish, rhubarb, chard and onion sets, as well as blueberries, raspberries, grapevines, cilantro and fennel.

Independent retailers stock varieties known to thrive in our climate and soil. If you want to try more exotic varieties or heirlooms, you'll have to grow most of them from seed.

For a more complete list of when to plant vegetables from seeds, see <http://agie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/publications/nveglst.html>. Or, for a less-comprehensive but easier-to-read version, see <http://nhg.com/vegplantdates.htm>.



## THE WEEK

TUESDAY

### HEALTHY LIVING

**Heart health:**

Stress could literally be breaking your heart; plus diet, fitness and medical advice in a special section

WEDNESDAY

### TASTE

**Love it:**

What grape to sip with a Ghirardelli bar? And other chocolate-wine pairings from our panel

NEXT WEEK

### HOME

**Chic cheek:**

A retailing executive showcases his sophisticated yet totally quirky sense of style

### POINT ... CLICK ... CATCH UP

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Special Advertising Feature

# Shopping the Town

Semiannual clearance sale

**Jar candle sale**

Get a head start on Valentine's Day shopping with our jar candle sale! Buy 2 get a third for half price (of equal or less value). Trapp, Votivo, Tyler, Archipelago, Orleans, & Aromatique. \$7.95 and up. Sale runs from Fri., Jan 26, through Fri., Feb. 2. **SampleHouse & CandleShop**, in Dallas at Casa Linda, Walnut Hill, Preston Royal, Highland Park, and Oak Lawn Ave. In Plano at Preston & Park. In Frisco at Preston & 121.

**19th century twin vitrines**

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