

# TUV HASHAVUA: BEST OF THE WEEK



**TUV HA'ARETZ  
CSA AT THE  
FOREST HILLS  
JEWISH CENTER**

## Turning School Food into Good Compost

*Al Baker, nytimes.com*

The sad voyage of fruits and vegetables from lunch lady to landfill has frustrated parents, nutritionists and environmentalists for decades. Children are still as picky and wasteful as ever, but at least there is now a happier ending — that banana- and PB&J-filled bin is a composting container, part of a growing effort to shrink the mountains of good food being hauled away to trash heaps every day.

Depending on where the school is, the uneaten and half-eaten leftovers are sent to a compost heap at a former Staten Island landfill or to upstate New York or Delaware, where the slop is churned into nutrient-enriched dirt that farmers or landscape architects can buy. The city plans to also send some scraps to a wastewater treatment plant in Brooklyn, where “digesters” turn garbage into usable gas.

“There’s a lot of carbon in that banana that’s going to end up growing something else in your garden at home,” John T. Shea, the chief of the Education Department’s school facilities, said. “It’s the circle of life, baby.”

The hope is that by building up composting in school, the city will help the environment, instill a sense of conservation in school children and, critically, save some money. The city paid \$93 per ton in 2013 to dump in landfills, up from \$68 in 2004. Composting saves the city \$10 to \$50 per ton, because the cost is offset by the sale of the end product, according to the Sanitation Department.

Depending on viewpoint, the sheer amount of school food being composted is either impressive or depressing. Even with less than a quarter of school buildings participating, the weight of all the discarded bananas and other scraps — including anything children can put into their mouths, from chips to sandwich meat to salads — came to 1,400 tons between September and March.

New York’s school composting efforts are part of an expanding citywide program in which residents are being asked to separate their scraps for weekly pickups by city sanitation trucks. The city is also teaming up with school districts in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami and Orlando to make bulk purchases of compostable plates that are used in place of plastic foam plates, said Eric S. Goldstein, the chief executive for school support services for the New York City Education Department. Those plates go straight into the compost bins — at least when students get it right.

At P.S. 30, students done with their lunch have a choice of three plastic bins: one for landfill garbage like plastic bags, foam cups

## WEEK #5: 7/1/2014

Many Thanks to Our  
Volunteers:

**7/1 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM**

**Sue Izeman**

**Jessie Schwartz**

**Jennifer Armas**

**Unclaimed Shares Delivery:**

**Adrian Hayes**

**7/8 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM**

**Carrie Leifer**

**Daisy Alter**

**Benjamin Pecora-Sanefski**

**Unclaimed Shares Delivery:**

**Alfred Rosenblatt**

**LAST MINUTE CONTACT INFO:**  
For urgent last-minute pick-up or volunteering changes on pick-up day, call/text Felicia 917-627-0669 or email Judy trupinjet@gmail.com

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the  
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106-06 Queens Blvd.  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
718-264-7000, ext 250 | tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**  
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www.goldenearthworm.squarespace.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

and wrappers; one for recyclables, like metal, glass, plastic and milk cartons; and one for food scraps. Nearby is a red bucket where unconsumed milk is poured; it is later sent down a drain.

The assembly line operation showed the mind-bending task at hand: Some children wrongly threw the new trays into the landfill bin. Others hastily dumped leftover chips, bag and all, into the food bucket, which was catching all manner of the day's offerings: intact or half-eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and cheese sandwiches, cucumbers, salad bar detritus and those bananas, which, truth be told, looked a day or so shy of being ripe.

A "green team" of students — wearing latex gloves or holding plastic talons — picked out wayward junk. One of them, aged 10, said they had noticed that the younger children seemed to get it right more often than the older ones.

After school, the bagged food scraps go on the curb. They are picked up each day by Sanitation Department trucks, then driven to the compost sites, where they are picked clean of contaminants, like plastic bits, and laid on a bed of dry wood chips. More wood chips are laid on. The muck is turned, so oxygen gets in to aid decomposition. 6 to 9 months later: market-ready dirt.

Of course, it would be much simpler if the decomposition took place inside the child.

"Obviously we can't force them to eat it," Joseph Napolitano, P.S. 30's assistant principal, said as he stood by the lunch line, watching each plate get its obligatory banana. At least now, though, he said, "It's really being recycled whether they eat it or not; it's not really a waste."



*Al Baker is the public education reporter at the New York Times.*

## COMPOSTING AT TUV HA'ARETZ

Our CSA — through the cooperation of the FHJC — maintains two composting bins.

The key to good composting is balance: organic material (greens) must be in the right proportion with carbon-rich materials (browns: leaves, shredded paper). A good balance will promote the good microbial activity, and a properly maintained compost should not smell much at all. The end result is a nutrient-rich material that provides a wonderful supplement to garden soil.

Members can bring "greens" and "browns" to pick-up — the bins are in the alley behind the FHJC. This will increase compost productivity and make compost available to those who may want it.

For more information, please contact our composting guru: [adrianthayes@gmail.com](mailto:adrianthayes@gmail.com)



## 7/1 What's in the Box: Fennel, Toscano Kale, Red Beets, Lettuce, Napa Cabbage, Escarole, Arugula

### GOLDEN EARTHWORM FARM NOTES

One of our irrigation pumps had broken, and the weather has been dry — no water meant thirsty crops, grumpy farmers, and hours taking apart the pump to figure out what's wrong. No help from the local irrigation company — they are fixing pumps all over the area. We've ordered replacement parts from GA and hope that fixes the problem, and we're working the remaining pump hard ... Just a typical week at the farm!

### Our U-Pick season is over...

We're planting more for harvest next June — we will have plenty next year!



### FENNEL ESCAROLE KALE STEW WITH BROWN BUTTER & HERBS

Serves 4 | *Michelle Bernstein*

*Adapted from [finecooking.com](http://finecooking.com)*

2 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp olive oil  
12 grape tomatoes or 2-3 tomatoes, coarsely diced  
½ cup thinly sliced fennel  
3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
1 cup thinly sliced escarole leaves  
1 tbsp sherry  
1 cup broth  
1 cup thinly sliced kale leaves  
1/8 tsp crushed red pepper flakes  
¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped  
½ tsp fresh rosemary, minced  
2 tsp lemon zest (half a lemon)  
1 tsp lemon juice  
salt and pepper, to taste

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook butter till it turns golden-brown, 2 minutes. Pour into small bowl and set aside.

In the same skillet over medium-high heat, cook tomatoes in olive oil till the skins start to blister, 2-3 minutes. Add escarole and stir, 1 minute. Add sherry, turn heat to high and cook till evaporated, 30-60 seconds. Add broth and boil till slightly reduced, 3-4 minutes. Stir kale and pepper flakes into broth and cook till wilted, 1 minute.

Remove from heat, stir in parsley, rosemary, butter, lemon zest and juice. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve in bowls with toast/bread, or as a side dish.



**FRUIT SHARES START THIS WEEK!**

**HERB SHARES — TBA**