



THINK GREEN



EAT GREEN

FOOD WASTE (REVISITED)

For our first newsletter of 2022, we decided to take a look back at issues covered during the past three years. Most of these topics are worth revisiting as they become only more concerning with each passing year.

To name just a few:

- Why Buy Food Locally?
- GMOs – Fear or Embrace?
- What is Biodiversity?
- Sustainable Cooking Oils
- Meatless Eating

You can find all newsletters to date [here](#), archived on the Green Team's website.

Going forward in 2022, the newsletter will also include a recommended food sustainability-related **book** and **film**. Most books will be available through the Harford County Public Library (HCPL) system. The films will be available on disc from HCPL



and/or various streaming platforms.



Our first review topic is **Food Waste**.

[The original newsletter from October 2019 is available [here](#).]

Unfortunately, data on food waste in the U.S. has not improved. Fully 35% of all food produced in the U.S. is wasted, according to **ReFED**, a national nonprofit organization working to end food loss and waste across the U.S. food system. Most of this waste ends up in landfills, creating an anaerobic environment, and producing the powerful greenhouse gas methane. Also, food waste comprises over 20% of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) landfill contents, making it the single largest contributor.

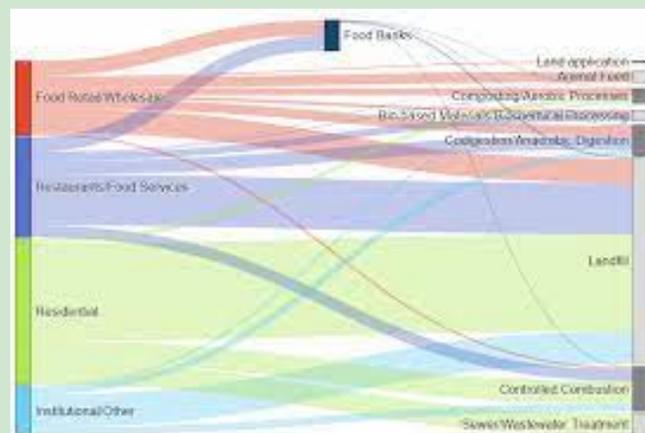


ReFED's "[Roadmap to 2030](#)" uses a systemwide approach to address waste in the food supply chain. This initiative, begun in 2020, promises a 50% reduction of food waste by 2030 if specific, identified actions are taken by all

involved (food producers, governments, non-profits, funders).

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2020 published a [report](#) "Facts and Figures about Materials, Waste and Recycling."

This very in-depth report contains an intriguing graphic chart depicting the flow of waste from food generators to "food waste management pathways." One striking "pathway" shows that *the bulk of residential food waste goes directly to landfills*.



In Havre de Grace, we have made great progress in keeping residential food waste out of landfills. We are fortunate to have a Food Waste Disposal collection site at the



foot of Congress Avenue, just outside Hutchins Park. The collection bins are open from 7 am to 7 pm every day. This Green Team initiative is maintained through a partnership of the City of Havre de Grace and Veteran Compost of Aberdeen. All of the food waste deposited in these bins is diverted from landfills;

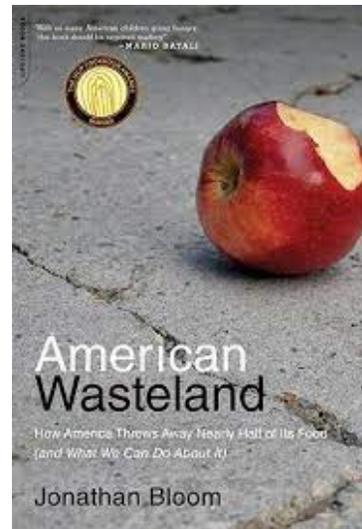
instead, Veteran Compost turns it into high-quality, organic compost. This aerobic process produces NO methane.

As mentioned in the October 2019 newsletter, there are many ways to reduce food waste: backyard composting if you are a gardener, purchasing “just enough” food, cooking “just enough” at mealtimes, using perishable foods first, and checking the condition - as well as the expiration date - of processed foods before tossing.

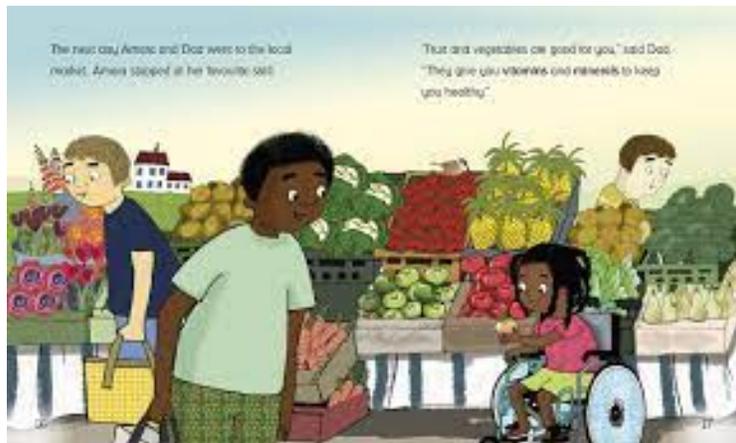
Our suggested book is ***American Wasteland: How America Throws Away Nearly Half of Its Food (and What We Can Do About It)*** by Jonathan Bloom (Da Capo Lifelong Books, 2010).

Jonathan Bloom is a journalist, consultant, and food waste expert who created the blog *Wasted Food*. His writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Newsweek*.

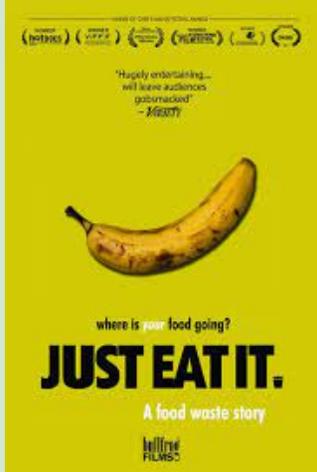
In *American Wasteland*, Bloom wades into a garbage heap to unearth what our squandered food says about us, why it matters, and how you can make a difference starting in your own kitchen—reducing waste and saving money. The book uncovers not only how and why we waste, but, most importantly, what we can do about it.



Younger readers might enjoy ***Don't Waste Your Food (Good to Be Green)*** by Deborah Chancellor and Diane Ewen (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2020). Both books are currently available through Marina, HCPL's statewide method of requesting books.



Our related film is ***Just Eat It: a Food Waste Story***, 75 min (2014)



We all love food. As a society, we devour countless cooking shows, culinary magazines and foodie blogs. So how could we possibly be throwing nearly 50% of it in the trash?

Filmmakers and food lovers Jen and Grant dive into the issue of waste: from farm, through retail, all the way to the back of their own fridge. After catching a glimpse of the billions of dollars of good food that is tossed each year in North America, they pledge to quit grocery shopping and survive only on discarded food. What they find is truly shocking.

Just Eat It: a Food Waste Story is available on disc from HCPL and on the library's free streaming platform **Hoopla**.

SOME GREEN THOUGHTS



"Imagine walking out of a grocery store with four bags of groceries, dropping one in the parking lot, and not bothering to pick it up. That's essentially what we're doing in our homes today."

- Dana Gunders, Former Senior Scientist, Food & Agriculture Program, National Resources Defense Council

"Buy wisely, cook carefully, eat it all."

- Anonymous