

REUSING STARBUCKS COFFEE GROUNDS



Coffee drinkers around the world are expected to consume almost 7 million tonnes of the stuff each year by 2010, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, and that means a heck of a lot of spent grounds to dispose of. Rather than throw the nitrogen-rich material into landfills, global chain Starbucks has found a greener solution by giving it away to consumers with gardens. Eco approaches may be all the rage today, but Starbucks's Grounds for Your Garden program actually began as a grassroots initiative back in 1995. After growing steadily for almost a decade, it was officially launched in 2003, offering up free spent coffee grounds to North American customers year-round on a first come, first serve basis. Grounds are packaged in reused coffee bags and sealed with simple directions for using them in the garden or compost pile, where they can help improve soil quality. "Coffee grounds are a valuable source of nutrition for the garden," explains Ben Packard, director of environmental affairs for Starbucks. "Reusing coffee grounds in the garden is a great alternative to disposing this rich resource from our stores. It's a win for gardeners and a win for Starbucks." Indeed, now that the spotlight is shining full-force on companies' environmental practices, this kind of approach really is a win-win for everyone. It's relatively low-cost and easy to implement, but it means less waste in the landfills, a benefit for consumers and their gardens, and a warm and fuzzy green image for Starbucks—definitely worth emulating! Spotted by: Bjarke Svendsen

17th December 2007

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