Ur your Greens
Here’s how you can add a dash of aesthetics to compost-making

SMART SOLUTION Working with potters in rural areas, Poonam has come up with a product that is contemporary, smart, uses traditional art skills and is also sustainable for the potter community

The thought of converting every gram of kitchen waste into useful compost is exciting. But the process has never been as easy as it sounds. Enter the composters from Daily Dump. One look at them and you know that this is what crafts are supposed to be — aesthetic and functional. The coloured pots and urns are not just decorative, but can help to convert organic waste into rich compost for your plants. There are fancy composters abroad that require you to just switch them on. "Do we really need a light popping up to indicate ‘Compost Ready’?" asks Poonam Bir Kasturi, industrial designer. Through her project Daily Dump, she has designed simple terracotta composters one can use in homes and apartments. A brand of Playn’speak, Daily Dump composters are being launched on April 14, with presentations by various speakers on April 14, 15 and 16.

Poonam, founder-director of Playn’speak, a company that designs and manufactures new paradigm products, worked with several young people to come up with a design for a composter anyone could use. "Design is a powerful tool to ‘imagineer’ a system that can be organic and sustainable," says Poonam, who has designed such varied products as lamps, teaching material, book covers, computer-scanner-printer for U.S. teens and fun products for the home. A founder-faculty of Shristi Academy for Art, Design & Technology, the designer has always believed that good design has to be accessible to artisans at the grassroots level.

The composters are terracotta pots, decorative and affordable. (They cost between Rs. 95 and Rs. 650.) Once you start collecting daily kitchen waste, they get converted into compost over a period of time. They come in sets of three and you can buy as many depending on the amount of kitchen waste your home generates. Daily Dump will also offer a service to those who do not want to handle the "mess".

"Composting is a natural process. We can all personally own and enjoy a window into this natural process — we can dig our hands into the pile and feel the heat and generate our own understanding of ourselves, the earth — why should a designer stifle this window and dress it with something else?
The design question was: how can a designer enlarge it?" wondered Poonam, and that set her on a long process of research and design.

Daily Dump has a production and distribution system that is an open-source method for knowledge dissemination — of drawings, communication material and business information. Working with potters in rural areas, the designer has come up with a product that is contemporary, smart, uses traditional art skills and is also sustainable for the potter community. "I had to design around our ‘convenience’ hang-up — with design through visualisation and tapping into cultural icons — of ritualisation and emotional empathy with the garden, outdoors, clay and so on," says Poonam.

If the idea has grown on you, drop in at the launch, chat with experts in the field, and carry a few composters back home.

For details on the project call 98442-39660.

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