

# **The Walking Windrow (Follow-Along) Project**



*Your Guide to the Key Dates and Updates*

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**VERY IMPORTANT (2019) Update:** This guide was originally written in November 2018. At the time, my live-action video updates were *only* available in the private Facebook group. More recently I finally managed to get them all compressed (sacrificing a little quality – but still very much worth it) and added to the Walking Windrow Journal page. I decided to keep this guide in case some of you preferred to access the (higher quality) videos in the FB group – or as an add-on resource for the Journal – but again, just want to make it clear that the videos I've linked to (and summarized) below can now be found in the main members area. On that note I will now pass you over to “2018 Bentley” (lol)...

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Hi Everyone!

I agonized a little over how to best share the video updates I've been shooting nearly every time I've been at the project site. As I discovered, even very short live action videos end up as HUGE files, so I realized the bandwidth demand would be off the charts (especially as time passes). At first I thought maybe unlisted YouTube videos might work, but this turned out to be a *terrible* choice – video quality was poor and they had distractions and sharing options I didn't feel comfortable with.

Then it hit me...what about posting them in the private Facebook group? Only members would be able to see them, even if “shared” and it would offer an even better way to initiate discussions about the work that's been done so far.

And as I discovered, the quality is MUCH better than what I was seeing with YouTube!

That being said – one of the disadvantages of this approach is that these updates – especially the older ones – will end up buried in the overall newsfeed of the group as more posts get added. So...I decided to put together a PDF guide with direct links (“permalinks”) to each video. This actually worked out really well since I had already started a “project highlights” guide to help people get caught up quickly – these two have now been merged into this one resource.

Long winded lead-ins aside...

You can think of this document as a sort of tour guide for the updates. There will be a LOT more added over time, so it's important to have an organized resource like this where you can easily see *what* happened and *when*.

### Some Very Important Things to Keep in Mind

1) **There are in effect TWO main “member areas”**. Sure, I could have just done everything in the Facebook group, but that would have limited my design/sharing options, and would not been a good way to serve those who don't like Facebook. The Compost Guy Portal member's area (what you should have received login information for right after purchase) is where you will find the written updates and photos - and likely various other info resources over time. As touched on, the private FB group is where videos will be posted, announcements made (along with email list), and discussions started. Please make sure you take advantage of BOTH these important resources so you can get the most from the project.

2) **The videos are FAR from “professional”**. When this project started, I still wasn't sure what I was doing with it (as far as sharing it goes). I simply pulled out my phone and shot footage – and, in hindsight, I'm SO glad I did. I like to think the filming got a bit better as the updates progressed – and if I end up with enough people involved I will likely work on improving my methods even more as time passes – but for the most part it's pretty raw and real. I kinda like it that way, since it gives an authentic feel to what I was doing that day, conditions etc. Bottom-line...please be prepared for shakiness, some rapid rotations, and bad audio (wind, sniffles, other auditory annoyances). Good news is that there is lots of solid information presented and on average, the videos themselves are very short (most are less than 5 min).

3) **Not all updates have videos**. There were some smaller updates that didn't really need video footage (or it just wasn't convenient to shoot it etc). Here in the guide I will share the date and a very quick summary of what I did – but again, you will need to access main journal page for the full update and pictures (every single update at least has pictures and information).

OK, with all the preliminaries out of the way...

Below you will find a listing of key dates, their significance, and links to videos (you will need to be logged into Facebook, and already added as a member of the WWP private group in order to access them).

NOTE: There are some “pre-project” dates added to provide a little background on how all this came about (you can find the full “backstory” on this in the Welcome Guide)

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**May 31, 2018** – “Manure Mecca” - I reached out to a horse boarding stable 10 minutes from my house to see about the possibility of collecting some of their manure. They got back to me quickly saying I could take as much as I wanted, any time I wanted (heap is outside of their property line). Added bonus – the heap already had a population of Red Worms in it!

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**Early July, 2018** - “Mother of All Connections” – Thanks to some gardening/composting services I was offering on a local classified ads site, I ended up connecting with the owner of a 100 acre property, only 15 minutes from me. To make things “weirdly amazing”: 1) the property literally backs onto the property of the horse boarding stable I just mentioned (and is a 5 min drive), 2) the property owner and I very quickly realized we had a mutual interest in vermicomposting, 3) he offered to let me start projects on-site and 4) even said I could use his truck (and various other resources he had available)!

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**“Dog Days”** - July and most of August 2018 – During this period I focused mainly on paid work around the property, which included establishment of a Red Worm “seed heap” (so he was always guaranteed to have a supply of them), veggie garden and young apple orchard (and other young tree) maintenance, and compost heap overhaul. During this time I proposed a serious joint project to produce large quantities of worm castings and Red Worms – got an enthusiastic stamp of approval – and started the site-scouting process. NOTE: I wouldn't be surprised at all if the owner would have accepted the proposal as a paid project, but I offered to do all of the work for free as a show of my appreciation for the opportunity, and since I would be potentially benefiting from it as well.

*And thus the ball was rolling...*

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**Day 00** – Wednesday August 22, 2018 - Finally got the project started. Cleared out a (heavily overgrown) patch of ground in a nicely sheltered location near the front of the property. Roughed out an initial bed footprint and excavated a starter pit, and short stretch of trench. Established a small "safe habitat" heap, mostly made up of worm-rich horse manure, with a cover of vegetation I gathered from nearby.

[Video #1](#) – (1:22)

[Video #2](#) – (1:31)

[Video #3](#) – (2:00)

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**Day 02** – Friday August 24, 2018 – Popped back over to project site with some more manure (aged and newer – all of it with worms in it) to bulk up the habitat zone a bit more.

**\*\*No Videos\*\***

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**Day 15** – Thursday September 06, 2018 – On-site for some other work, but brought some manure with me for the bed. Bulked it up some more and did a bit more trench work.

[Video #1](#) – (0:42)

[Video #2](#) – (1:49)

[Video #3](#) – (1:37)

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**Day 22** – Thursday September 13, 2018 – Another work-day (elsewhere on property) but I had the opportunity to take pick-up truck out for a manure run. Didn't add to bed – started up a manure stockpile heap off to side.

**\*\*No Videos\*\***

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**Day 50** – Thursday October 11, 2018 – Left the bed to sit for nearly a month. Hauling manure that day so continued to bulk up my project stockpile. Found plenty of worms.

[Video](#) – (4:05)

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**Day 56** – Wednesday October 17, 2018 – Discovered that boarding stable cleared all their manure to spread on the fields! Gathered a lot of local materials (eg meadow grass, apples) near the project site and added as “food” (along with manure) to the bed. Very productive day of trench digging. Started laying down false bottom as well.

[Video](#) – (3:27)

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**Day 62** – Tuesday October 23, 2018 – Super miserable day. Temps in bed looking great. Started a meadow grass (etc) resource heap. Finished off stretch of false bottom with more wood chips and cardboard “floor”. Bulked up bed with rich food mix and thick cover materials

[Video #1](#) – (1:43)

[Video #2](#) – (1:14)

[Video #3](#) – (2:58)

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**Day 64** – Thursday October 25, 2018 – More material added to grass heap. Started a wood chip heap up closer to bed. Leading edge created with manure + rich food mix, and covered with thick grass.

[Video #1](#) – (4:03)

[Video #2](#) – (1:12)

[Video #3](#) – (1:15)

[Video #4](#) – (3:32)

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**Day 68** – Monday October 29, 2018 – Wood chip and grass heaps bulked up even more. New long-term food heap started up with fall leaves (plans to add other materials over time as well). Bulked up habitat zone with yard wastes etc. Added more manure and food mixes to leading edge (and was surprised by a critter). Two days prior – GREAT news from local horse ranch! Lots of manure – they will even drop it off.

[Video](#) – (4:58)

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**Day 71** – Thursday November 01, 2018 - “Off-site” update. Day after Halloween (evening before garbage day), I went on pumpkin gathering mission. Slim pickings at first, but things turned around and I ended up with a trunk full (and then some).

\*\*\*No Video\*\*\*

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**Day 72** – Friday November 02, 2018 – A lot of recent rain – and some soil washed down into trench (not too much though). Manure man surprised me by showing up unexpectedly (was still waiting to hear back) – ends up bring first load of manure over! Started putting it to good use. Bulked up new food heap with manure and pumpkins. Temps in leading edge up around 40 C (104 F) – between 20 and 30 C (68 and 86 F) in habitat zone.

[Video](#) – (4:59)

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**Day 75** – Monday November 05, 2018 – Lots more manure work. Started a new specialized heap up closer to worm bed. Bulked up food heap with more manure and pumpkins. Bulked up leading edge with pumpkin wastes and manure. Did a few wood chip transfer runs, and one meadow grass run. Temps continue to look good. A little more trench extension work before calling it a day.

[Video](#) – (7:19)

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**Day 77** – Wednesday November 07, 2018 – Everything looking great in bed – nice temps, lots of worms and other organisms. Decided to add some pumpkin

to habitat zone. Continued to bulk up food resource heap – but using somewhat different approach now that sides are getting steeper. Rescued a frog.

[Video #1](#) – (2:24)

[Video #2](#) – (2:13)

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**Day 78** – Thursday November 08, 2018 – Meadow grass (etc) resource heap finally heating up (~ 30 C / 86 F). Discovered new (more effective) approach for harvesting the grass – and gathered multiple loads. Added a lot of pumpkin, manure, cardboard and wood chips to rear of habitat zone (changed my mind about mainly focusing on insulation back there). Said my good-byes to a popular “Peanuts” character. ;- ) Added a bunch of catnip (lots growing nearby) to bed, since it might have some rodent-repellent properties. Bulk up food resource heap with more pumpkin chunks and manure (and created a “Compost Guy Christmas Tree” while I was at it). Expanded base layer of chips for new large-scale manure heap and continued to transfer manure over from drop-off heap. Manure man showed up right as I was about to move last of it – ends up dropping off THREE separate loads that day!

[Video](#) – (3:56)

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**Day 79** – Friday November 09, 2018 – Had hoped to take this day off, but needed to get a lot of manure moved. Was feeling exhausted and brain-dead from all the labor, and late nights working on follow-along. Test out my brand new pitch fork for manure work – it rocks! Build up new manure (+ wood chips) heap a LOT. Smaller heap of wood chips nearly used up. More bulking up of food resource heap and a smaller heap beside it. Added thick layer of bulky, straw-rich manure as cover on bed.

[Video #1](#) – (3:55)

[Video #2](#) – (6:29)

[Video #3](#) – (3:29)

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**Day 82** – Monday November 12, 2018 – Surprise visit from the “fall leaf fairy” over the weekend and I find pick-up truck load of extra leaves on my food resource heap Monday morning (no one claims credit for it). Wheelbarrow tire is

in rough shape so I need to go a fair bit lighter with my loads. Very cold on weekend, yet temps remain exactly where I want them. More bulking up of food resource pile (how could I not with all those new leaves?!). More manure added to leading edge. Lots more manure transferred over to new large-scale manure heap as well.

[Video](#) – (4:43)

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**Day 84** – Wednesday November 14, 2018 – Winter has arrived! Quite a bit of snow cover but temps in the worm bed and food resource heap still looking great (big manure heap still not really warming up). Grass heap cool again. Trench is “finished” until spring. Thick layer of chips and cardboard floor added. Worm bed finally tarped. We’re officially “winter-ready”, folks! Update (posting) break while I get project follow-along launched (still visiting project site, though).

[Video #1](#) – (5:32)

[Video #2](#) – (2:04)

[Video #3](#) – (1:53)

[Video #4](#) – (1:16)

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**Day 89** – Monday November 19, 2018 – After a pretty big storm (by early winter standards for my region, anyway) hit the previous Friday I wanted to see what (if any) impact the snow had on the system and resource heaps. Spoiler Alert – everything was pretty much the same. Temps were actually *warmer* in a lot of spots! Had planned to bulk things up with pumpkin etc, but didn't end up bothering

All 3 videos for Day 89 were added together as a single FB post. You can access them [>>HERE<<](#)

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**Day 92** – Thursday November 22, 2018 – An *unusually*-cold day with air temps in the “feels like” - 21 C (- 5.8 F) range. I was a bit nervous about the impact it might have on the bed so I decided to head over to project site to check on things. Once again – absolutely *nothing* to worry about! Pretty neat sight as I drove up laneway – clouds of water vapor billowing up from big manure heap

(forming ice crystals all around)! Spent some time bulking things up (in worm habitat zone only) with cardboard, wood chips and manure

All 4 videos for Day 92 were added together as a single FB post. You can access them [>>HERE<<](#)

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UPDATE (FALL 2019) – There were also a decent number of “Phase II” updates posted in the FB group (but I didn't get around to linking to them here – if there is enough interest I'd be happy to do so at some point).

Please be sure to also spend some time on the Walking Windrow Journal page (Compost Guy Course Portal) as well since I have a written overview of this (winter) period on the Journal page, as well as a Fall 2019 update.