



Community Composting: Lessons from NYC & Beyond

Brenda Platt

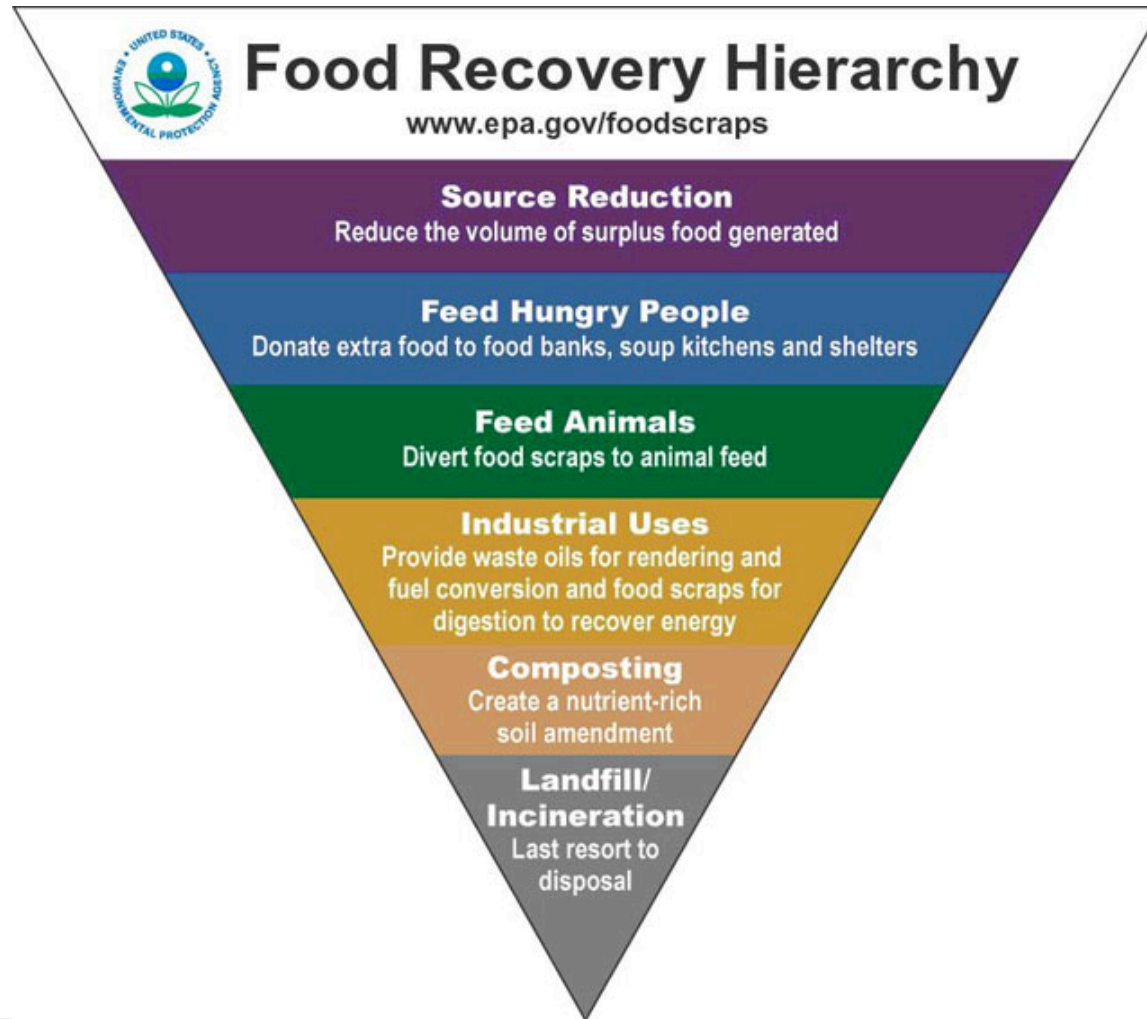
Director, Composting Makes \$en\$e Project

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

webinar presentation sponsored by NERC, SWANA, & NY DEC

September 16, 2014

US EPA Hierarchy of Food Scrap Recovery

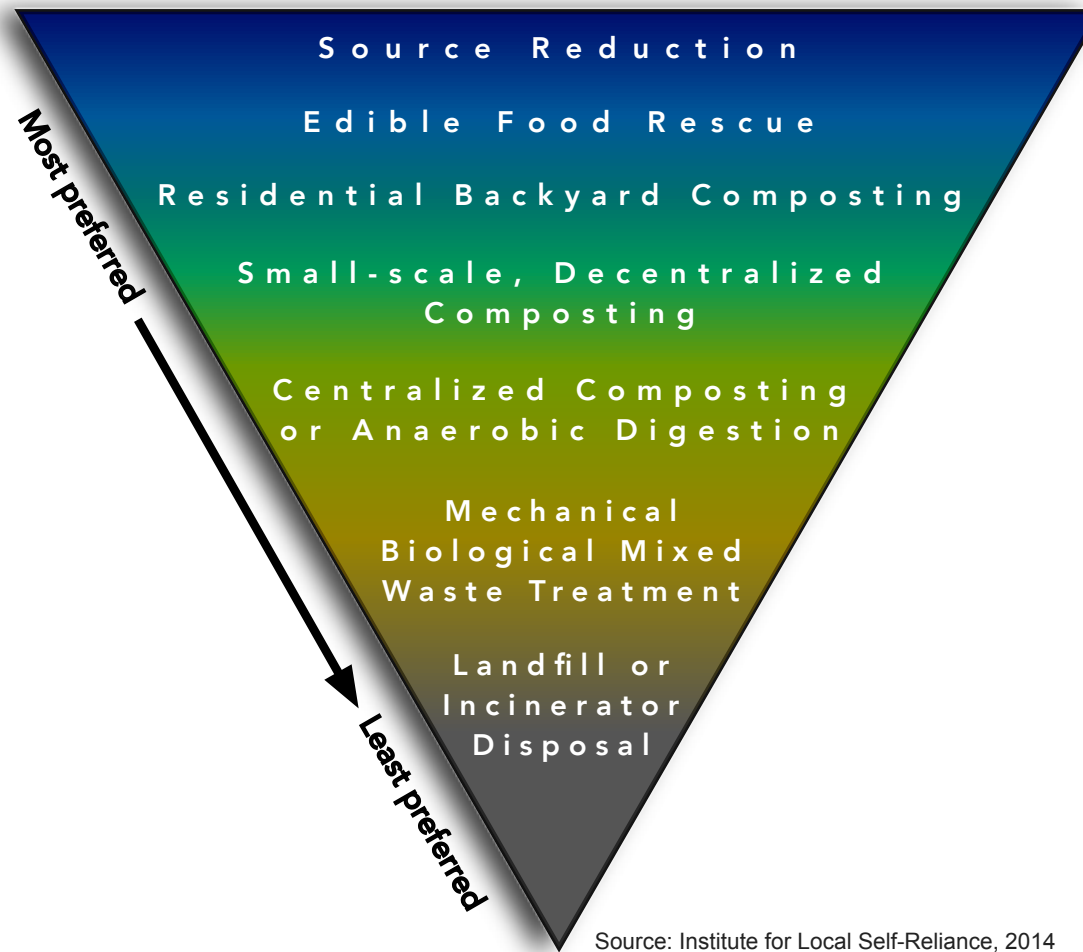


Composting, lots of ways



Revised Hierarchy of Food Scrap Recovery

HIERARCHY FOR REDUCING & RECYCLING FOOD SCRAPS AND OTHER ORGANIC DISCARDS



Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 2014

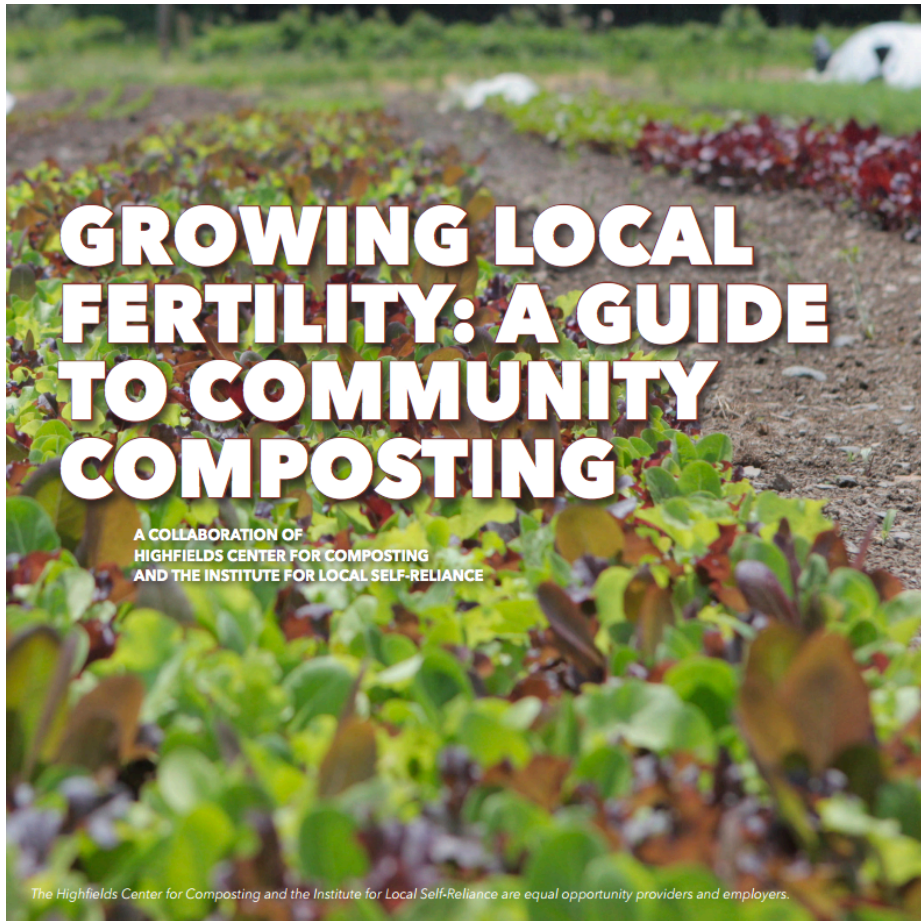
Austin zero waste plan

“...decentralized composting processes can reduce the carbon footprint of collection and transportation while consuming organics in more localized situations that do not require large organized collection programs.”

“The Department recognizes that, in addition to helping the City achieve its Zero Waste goals, composting also addresses the community’s interest in enriching the region’s soil, strengthening sustainable food production and completing the food cycle.”



The Austin Resource Recovery Master Plan
(December 2011), pp. 105-106. http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Trash_and_Recycling/MasterPlan_Final_12.30.pdf



[http://www.ilsr.org/
growing-local-fertility/](http://www.ilsr.org/growing-local-fertility/)

Joint project of ILSR's Composting Makes \$en\$e Initiative and Highfield's Close the Loop program

Supported by a grant by the Utilities Programs, USDA



What is community-based composting?

Community composting keeps the process and product as local as possible while engaging the community through participation and education



Compost builds community! (Photo: NYC Compost Project)

Principles

- Resources recovered
- Locally based and closed loop
- Organic materials returned to soils
- Community-scaled and diverse
- Community engaged, empowered, and educated
- Community supported



The NYC Compost Project's Master Composter Certificate Course trains community leaders to start community compost sites. (Photo: NYC Compost Project)

Types of Programs

1. Community gardens
2. Farms
3. Schools
4. Drop-off networks
5. Collection entrepreneurs
6. On-site composters
7. Off-site composters
8. Demonstration and community leader training sites
9. Worker-owned cooperatives
10. Home-based or homesteader hubs



Philly Compost offers pedal-powered collection service to neighboring restaurants within a 2-mile radius (Philadelphia)



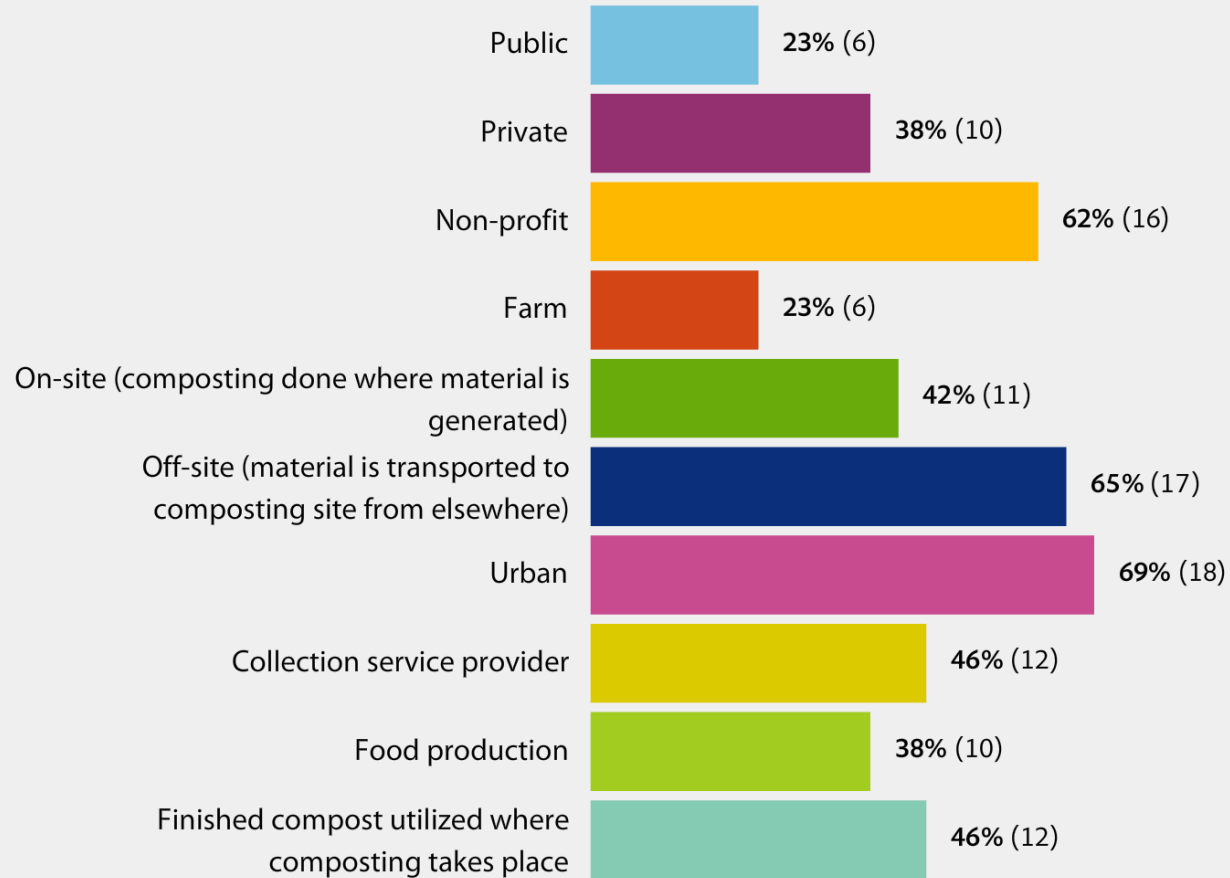
Community-Based Composters Identified & Surveyed

- 43 sites identified to survey in US
- 26 sites participated in survey
- Others identified after survey
- 31 programs profiled in Guide to Community Composting

15 different states, and DC:

NY MA PA AZ OH WI MN IL OK
UT VT CA KY NC ME

Type of Compost Operation (Check all that apply):



6 additional choices not shown

* 26 total responses, 84% of submissions

Table 3: Community Based Composting By Type (listed by date operation began)

NAME	CITY	ST	BEGAN	TYPE OF PROGRAM												
				Collection Entrepreneur	Community Garden	School	Farm, Urban	Farm, Rural	Drop-off Network	Off-site Composter	On-Site Composter	Demo & Training Site	Worker Cooperative	Home-based		
Resource Center	Chicago	IL	1983				x				x					
Wasatch Community Gardens	Salt Lake City	UT	1989		x						x					
Lower East Side Ecology Center	Lower East Side	NY	1990							x		x				
Brooklyn Botanic Garden	Brooklyn	NY	1993								x	x				
Growing Power	Milwaukee	WI	1993		x		x				x	x				
NYC Compost	5 boroughs	NY	1993		x				x	x		x				
Queens Botanical Garden	Queens/Flushing	NY	1993								x	x				
Greenway Environmental Services	Poughkeepsie	NY	2000			x				x	x					
Compost Club	Healdsburg	CA	2003			x					x					
Red Hook Community Farm	Brooklyn	NY	2003				x				x					
Close the Loop! Northeast Kingdom	Northeastern	VT	2006	x		x		x	x		x					
Pedal People Cooperative	Florence	MA	2002	x											x	
Grow Compost of Vermont, LLC	Waterbury	VT	2008	x				x								
Kompost Kids	Milwaukee	WI	2008	x	x				x		x	x				
Earth Matter	Governors' Island	NY	2009						x		x	x				
BIG! Compost	Queens	NY	2010							x	x					
CommonWealth Urban Farms	Oklahoma City	OK	2010				x				x					
ECO City Farms	Edmonston	MD	2010				x				x					
Univ. of Louisville	Louisville	KY	2010			x			x		x					
Close the Loop! St. Albans	Northwestern	VT	2011	x		x		x	x							
Ferrisburgh Central School	Ferrisburgh	VT	2011			x					x					

Table 3: Community Based Composting By Type (continued)

NAME	CITY	ST	BEGAN	TYPE OF PROGRAM												
				Collection Entrepreneur	Community Garden	School	Farm, Urban	Farm, Rural	Drop-off Network	Off-site Composter	On-Site Composter	Demo & Training Site	Worker Cooperative	Home-based		
Green NAU Energy Initiative	Flagstaff	AZ	2011		x											
Grow NYC	New York	NY	2011	x				x								
Philly Compost 19125	Philadelphia	PA	2011	x						x						
Dirt Factory/University City District	Philadelphia	PA	2012							x						
Empire Zero	Castleton	NY	2012	x												
Farmer Pirates Co-op/Compost Crew	Buffalo	NY	2012				x				x		x			
Fertile Ground	Oklahoma City	OK	2012										x	x		
Myrtle Village Green	Brooklyn	NY	2012		x						x					
NC Comm Gardens Partners	Greensboro	NC	2012		x						x					
We Got Leaves	Shorewood	WI	2012													x
Apple Ledge Farm	Coventry	VT	2013	x				x								
Community Composting Rochester	Rochester	NY	2013	x												
DC Public Schools	Washington	DC	2013			x					x					
DC Urban Greens	Washington	DC	2013				x									
Roots Composting, LLC	Flagstaff	AZ	2013	x						x					x	
The Farm Between	Jeffersonville	VT	2013	x				x								
University of Maine	Orono	ME	2013			x					x					
CERO	Boston	MA	2014	x												x
Lake Region Union High School	Orleans	VT	2014			x						x				
Tinmouth Compost	Tinmouth	VT	2014	x				x								

Kompost Kids (WI)

HOME ABOUT COMPOSTING NEWS & EVENTS PARTNERS DONATE

KOMPOST KIDS

COMPOST SITES

HOME > COMPOSTING > COMPOST SITES

Address -Search By City-

Radius 50 mi

Kompost Kids Demonstration site 2151 S. Robinson Avenue Milwaukee, WI 53207 [Directions](#)

Next Door Foundation 2545 N. 29th Street Milwaukee, WI 53210 [Directions](#)

Urban Eden Community Garden 620 N. 26th Street Milwaukee, WI 53233 [Directions](#)

Booth & Chambers Community Garden 2971 N. Booth Street Milwaukee, WI 53211 [Directions](#)

- Compost Sites
- How to Use a Community Compost Site
- Contribution Log
- What's In/Out?
- Start a Community Compost Site
- Restaurant Composting
- Postconsumer Pilot Project
- Participant Information Request
- Weekly Questionnaire
- Request Compost
- Additional Resources

Search



Drop-off Network

Home Services News/FAQ Partners Resources 19125 Product Us

Neighborhood Compost Map

Finding a Composting Site in your Neighborhood

Gardeners and confident composters: share your experience and your bins! You know that the best way to keep organics out of the waste stream is to compost in your own backyard. The reasons are many:

- > no emissions from transporting organics
- > low tech
- > least expensive

"The map is such an awesome resource!"
- unsolicited email, Philadelphia resident



By placing yourself on [the Philly Compost Map](#), you're not only showing overwhelming interest in composting, you'll also help us quantify reduced carbon and methane emissions for our region. The more composters, the better for the planet!

Compost sites on the Map are color coded:

- Shared community sites are **purple**. We ask donors to check with the Site Host before contributing. If your site can accept more organics, or already has more than your household contributing to it, we ask you to share it.
- Private sites are **red**. We ask that everyone check with the site contact before visiting. If your site cannot handle more organics, or is in a hard-to-access space, we suggest you list it as a private site.
- **Yellow** sites are folks that would love to find a shared site nearby. If your compost site is near one of these, please contact that neighbor and share your bin!
- Commercial sites are **green**. We're coming soon to Germantown!
- City sites are **blue**.

To add your site to the map:

- When viewing the map, click on the Edit button along the left side bar. If you don't see an Edit button, you'll need to log in to your Google account. If you don't have one, and don't want to create one, [send an email to us](#) with the location of your compost site.
- After you click the Edit button, you'll see options along the top left of the map itself.
- If you are clicked onto a point, you will be directed to edit just that point. To create a new point, make sure your cursor is not clicked on anything.
- Click on the placemark icon (looks like a tear drop) and position it where you'd like. Or ... while you have the map visible, enter a street address in the map search bar, and select Save to My Map, then to Philly Compost.
- Change teardrop color to **red** (for private) or **purple** (for shared) site, and add any other descriptive text to the text box.
- Click the Done button when you are finished (over to the left, where the Edit button was).



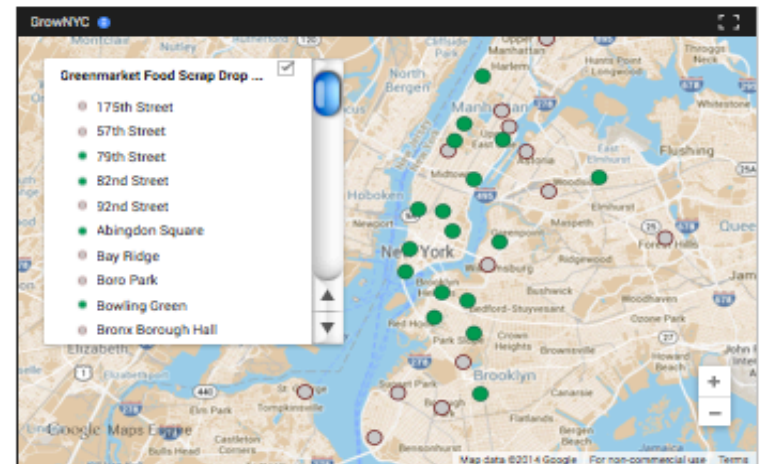
Home » Recycling Resources » Compost » Dropoff Locations

GREENMARKET FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION SCHEDULE

GrowNYC currently offers food scrap collection at 35 Greenmarket locations. Consult our [main compost page](#) for a guide of what we do and do not accept.

Please adhere to the drop-off schedule at each location. Food scraps cannot be accepted after stated hours. All locations are year-round unless noted otherwise.

In cases of severe winter weather, markets may close early or be cancelled. Please drop early and check our [blog](#) or [follow us on social media](#) for schedule updates.



Partner Key:
 DSNY = NYC Department of Sanitation
 GrowNYC = GrowNYC + Community Partners
 LES Ecology Center = Lower East Side Ecology Center
 BQGC/Compost [Formerly Western Queens Compost Initiative] (NYC Compost Project)
 Battery = Battery Conservancy
 NYRP = New York Restoration Project

BOROUGH	GREENMARKET	DAY	TIME	PARTNER
Bronx	Bronx Borough Hall Greenmarket Grand Concourse & 151st St	Closed until Spring. Dates Pending.	8am-2pm	GrowNYC
Bronx	Poo Park Greenmarket Grand Concourse & 192nd St	Closed until Spring. Dates Pending.	8am-1:30pm	GrowNYC
Brooklyn	Bay Ridge Greenmarket 3rd Ave & 95th St	Closed until Spring. Dates Pending.	8am-1pm	DSNY



IN
Local Self-Reliance

Urban Farms

Red Hook
Community Farm



Growing Power



ECO City Farms



Collection Entrepreneurs

PHILLY COMPOST NEIGHBORHOOD

CONTACT for PRICING: jen@phillycompost.com 215-880-0465



To maintain the Compost Coop as an affordable residential composting option, Philly Compost is now providing organics collection service! Pick-ups will be by bike and processed right in the neighborhood. Support your local economy while reducing your carbon footprint!

AFFORDABLE ORGANICS COLLECTION

ALL ORGANICS ACCEPTED

A GENEROUS HELPING OF FREE COMPOST EACH YEAR

CLEAN BINS AT EACH COLLECTION

WASTE DIVERSION REPORTS AVAILABLE

SMALLEST CARBON FOOTPRINT IN COMMERCIAL COMPOSTING

LOCAL, WOMAN OWNED SMALL BUSINESS



with the support of:



INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance

Worker-owned Cooperatives

Roots Composting



Est. 2013 **ROOTS** Flagstaff, AZ

What TO Compost

- Any Organic Material
- Fruits & Vegetables (including Skins/Peels/Pits)
- Egg Shells
- Coffee Grounds and Filters

Do NOT Compost

- Bread
- Meat
- Fish
- Cooking Oil
- Grease
- Waxed or used paper

For questions or to schedule a pickup, please call Patrick Pfeiffer, Roots Composting Technical Officer, 930-630-4364. Check out our website: rootscomposting.com THANKS!

Farmer Pirates



Pedal People



Amount of Material Composted

- 0-10 TPY: 4
- 10-100 TPY: 8
- 100-500 TPY: 6
- 500-1,000 TPY: 1
- Over 1,000 TPY: 3
(2,000; 9,000; 21,500)

TPY = tons per year

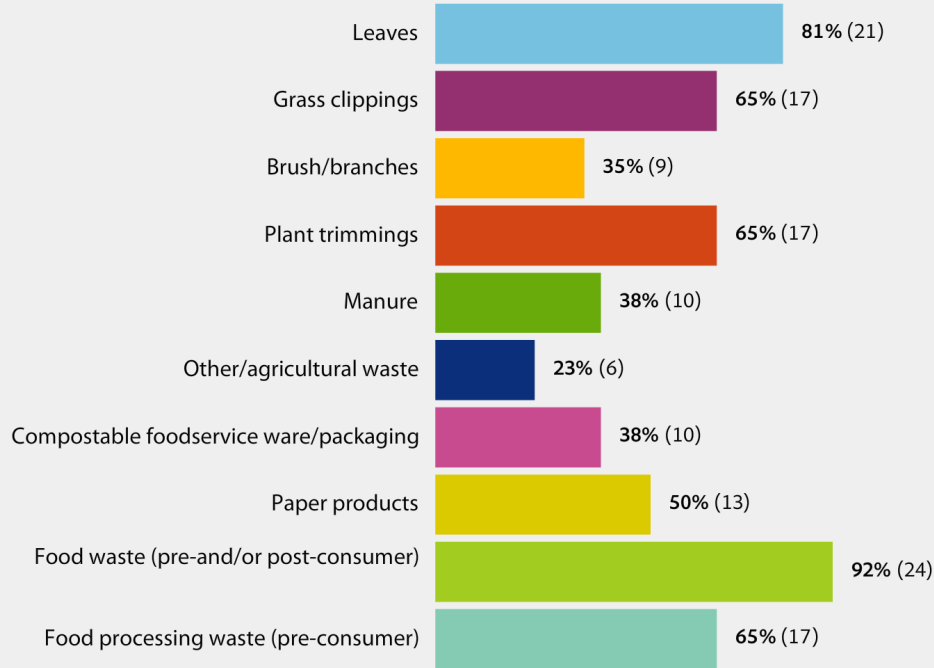


Growing Power (WI)



Earth Matter (NY)

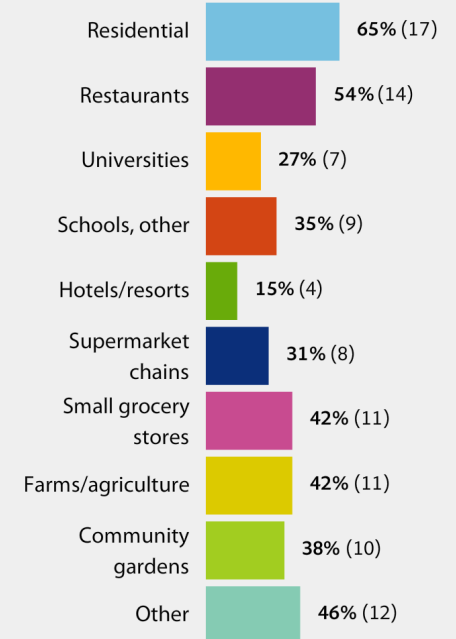
**Please indicate the types of material accepted for composting
(Check all that apply):**



3 additional choices not shown

* 26 total responses, 84% of submissions

**Please indicate the source of your incoming materials
(Check all that apply):**

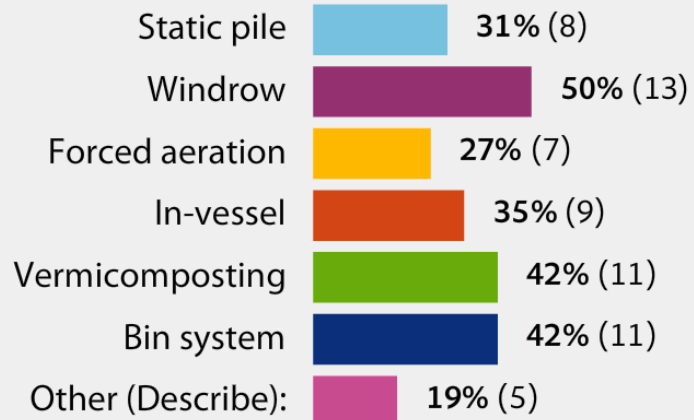


3 additional choices not shown

* 26 total responses, 84% of submissions



Composting method used (check all that apply):



* 26 total responses, 84% of submissions

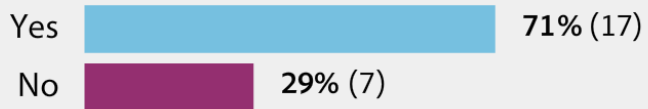


Earth Tub in-vessel compost system at Philly Compost (Philadelphia)



Building a windrow by hand at Red Hook Community Farm (Brooklyn, NY)

Did you design your own customized compost system?



* 24 total responses, 77% of submissions



Richard Hudak's prototype hand-powered rotating drum (VT)

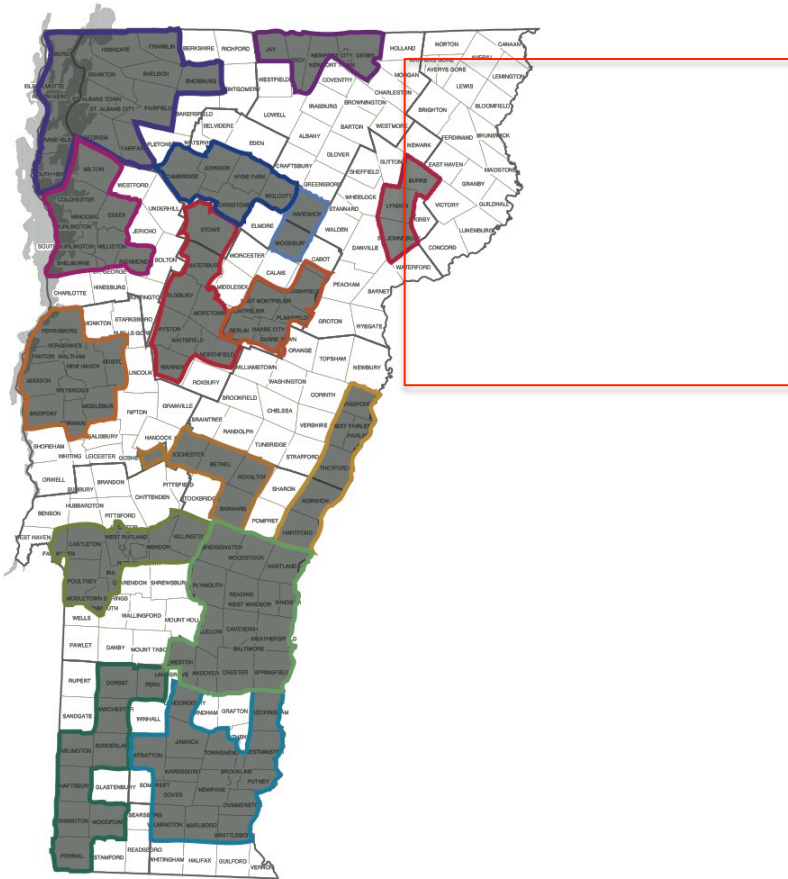


Kompost Kids have designed their own 3-bin system built from pallets with a few innovations. They line the bins with filter fabric (which is used in sewers), and use sliding rods (3rd photo) to hold the doors in place and to facilitate ease of removal. Both innovations make the bins more volunteer-friendly.

Compost Club, Sonoma Co., CA



Close the Loop! North East Kingdom, VT



Rural Regions

Micro Programs

Residential Drop Offs

On-Site Composting

Food Scrap Dense Regions
Dedicated Collection Routes

On-Farm Composters

Residential Drop Offs



Highfields
CENTER FOR
COMPOSTING

Residential Food Scrap Drop-Off



Highfields
CENTER FOR
COMPOSTING

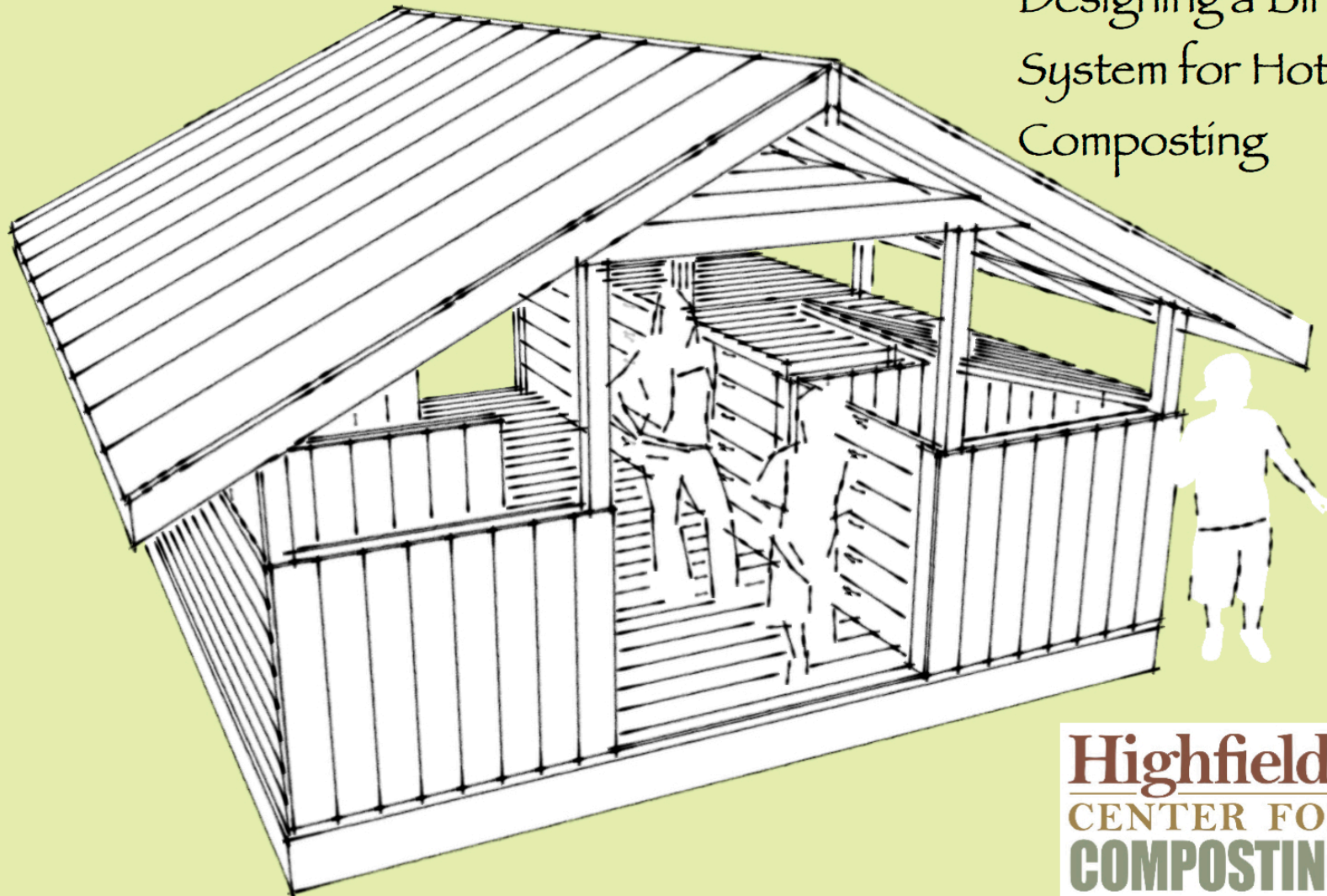
Ferrisburgh Central School Pilot





Highfields
CENTER FOR
COMPOSTING

Designing a Bin System for Hot Composting



Highfields
CENTER FOR
COMPOSTING

Tip: Be Frugal & Innovative



Sifting at Red Hook Community Farm. David Buckel designed the sifter to accommodate three wheelbarrows underneath, allowing workers to skip the step of shoveling up from the ground.



Above: Philly Compost trommel screen, built during one of its volunteer days. A local bike shop donated the bike rims (in return they received some compost).

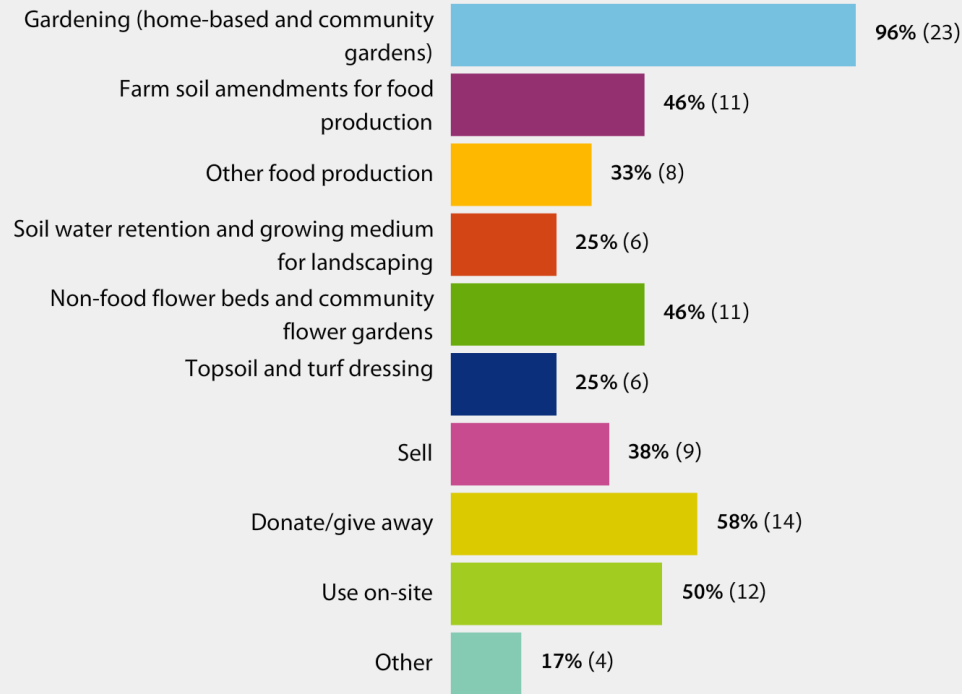


Right top: Earth Matters bicycle powered trommel screen, built by DB-Coop.



Right bottom: ECO City Farms hand crank screen.

Please indicate the end uses and applications for your finished compost (Check all that apply):



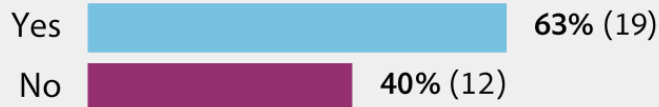
3 additional choices not shown

* 24 total responses, 77% of submissions



University of Maine (Orono). Finished compost is used on campus as a soil amendment, for landscaping, farming, and for horticultural classes. Goal is to produce 10 lbs of salad mix per day for one of the cafeterias.

Do you generate revenue?



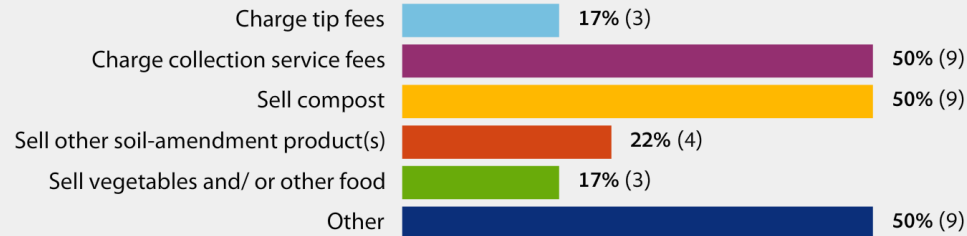
* 30 total responses, 97% of submissions



Growing Power (WI)

Growing Power sells bags of worm castings: "Black Gold – Worm Power Fertilizer"

If yes, how? (Check all that apply):



* 18 total responses, 58% of submissions



Pedal People (Florence/ Northampton, MA)



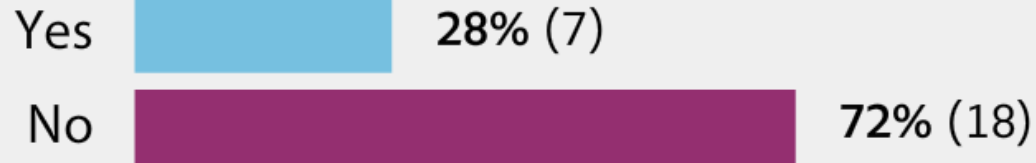
Philly Compost in used grain bag.



Red Hook Community Farm



Do you generate sufficient revenue to sustain operations?



* 25 total responses, 81% of submissions

6 of the 7 self-sustaining operations charge collection service fees or tip fees

Tip: Train



Consider starting a Master Composter training program. They require volunteerism. (NYC Compost Project)

Master Composters in training commit to community service hours and building bins. (NYC Compost Project.)



Tip: Recruit Volunteers

The NYC Compost Project cultivates community leaders through its Master Composter Certificate Program. These leaders volunteer their time to conduct public workshops (top photos), provide community outreach (bottom), bring people to gardens (middle), and spread compost.

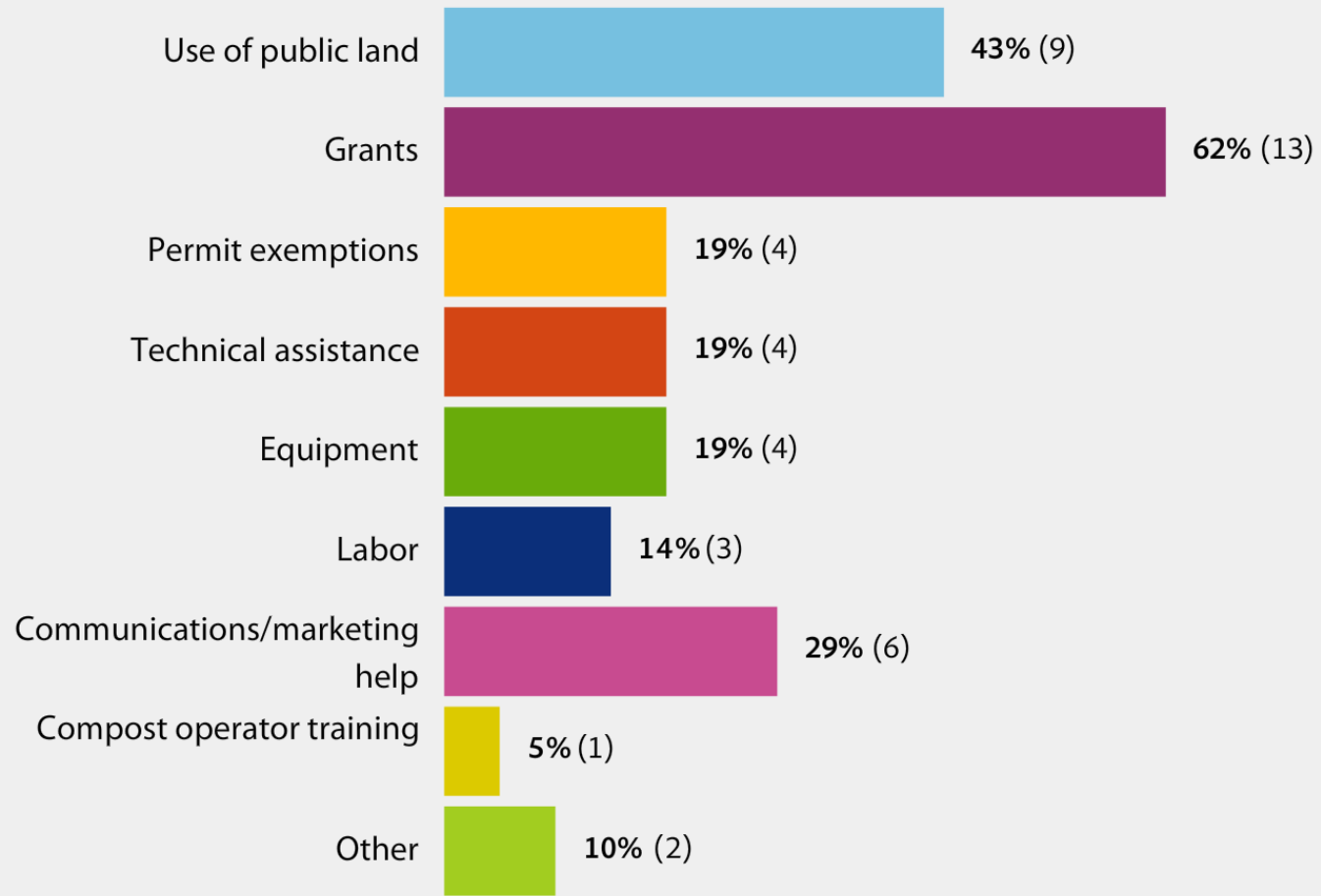


“Volunteers are extremely important, not only to actually help the small operation but they provide connection to community. With volunteers you can actually create community.” – Benny Erez, Senior Technical Advisor, ECO City Farms



ECO City Farms

What kind of government support did you or do you get (Check all that apply):

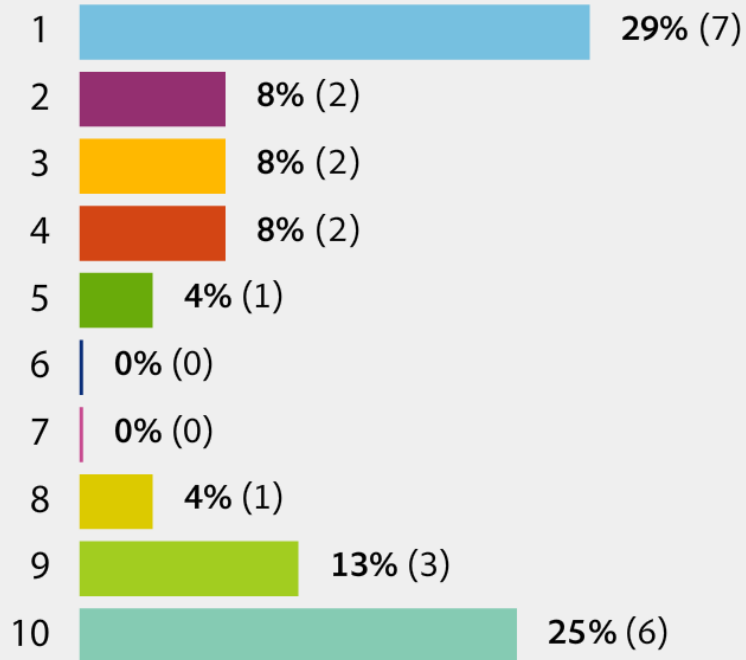


* 21 total responses, 68% of submissions

Challenges: Rate 1 to 10

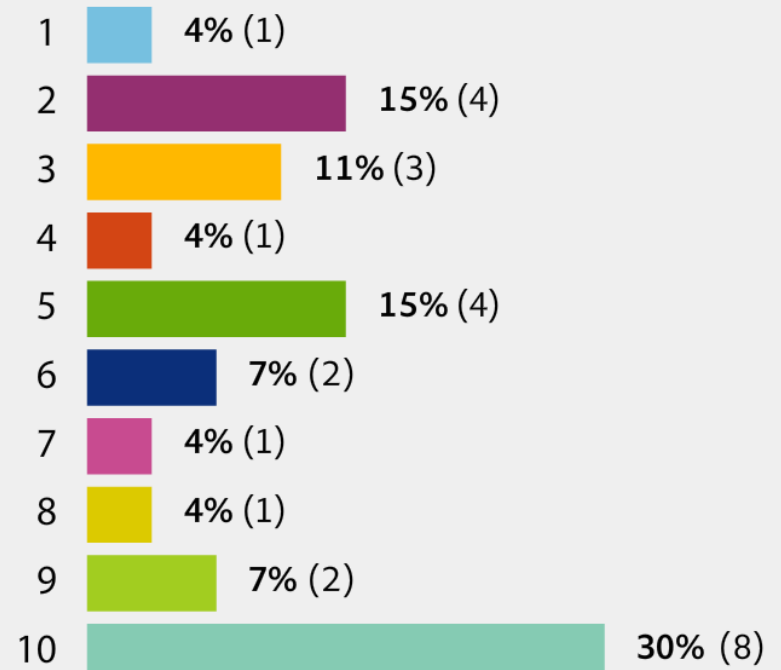
10 = worst challenge

Access to land



* 24 total responses, 77% of submissions

Space constraints



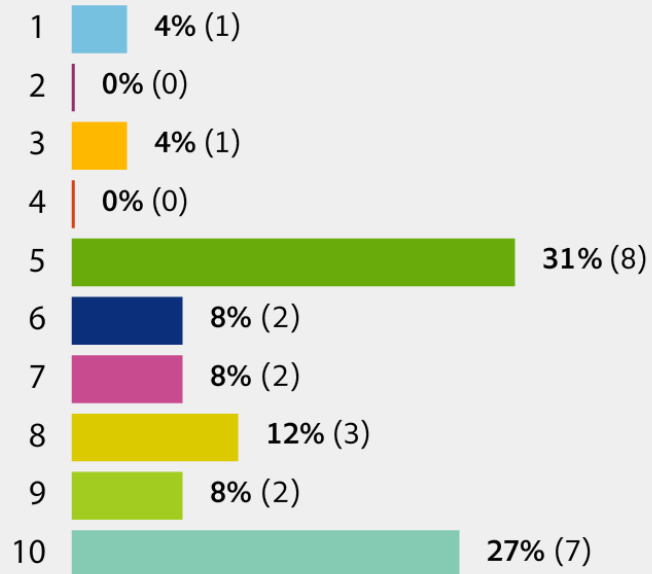
* 27 total responses, 87% of submissions

Government assistance needed to help with SPACE and LAND

- “Partnerships with municipality for access to equipment and land.”
- “Making empty and un-used public space available to composting operations.”
- “Public land donation/lease nearby.”
- “Land – access to public land”
- “Locating vacant land, even if for temporary use is needed.”
- “...we have been unable to find anyone, public or private, to lease us one parking space worth of land.”
- “Incentivize the conversion of empty and unused real estate for composting operations.”
- “More access to land”
- “Free land to do this would be very helpful.”
- “Designate public areas for compostable drop-offs.”
- “Locate land and allocate land for these operations. “

Challenges: Rate 1 to 10 10 = worst challenge

Funding/financing



* 26 total responses, 84% of submissions

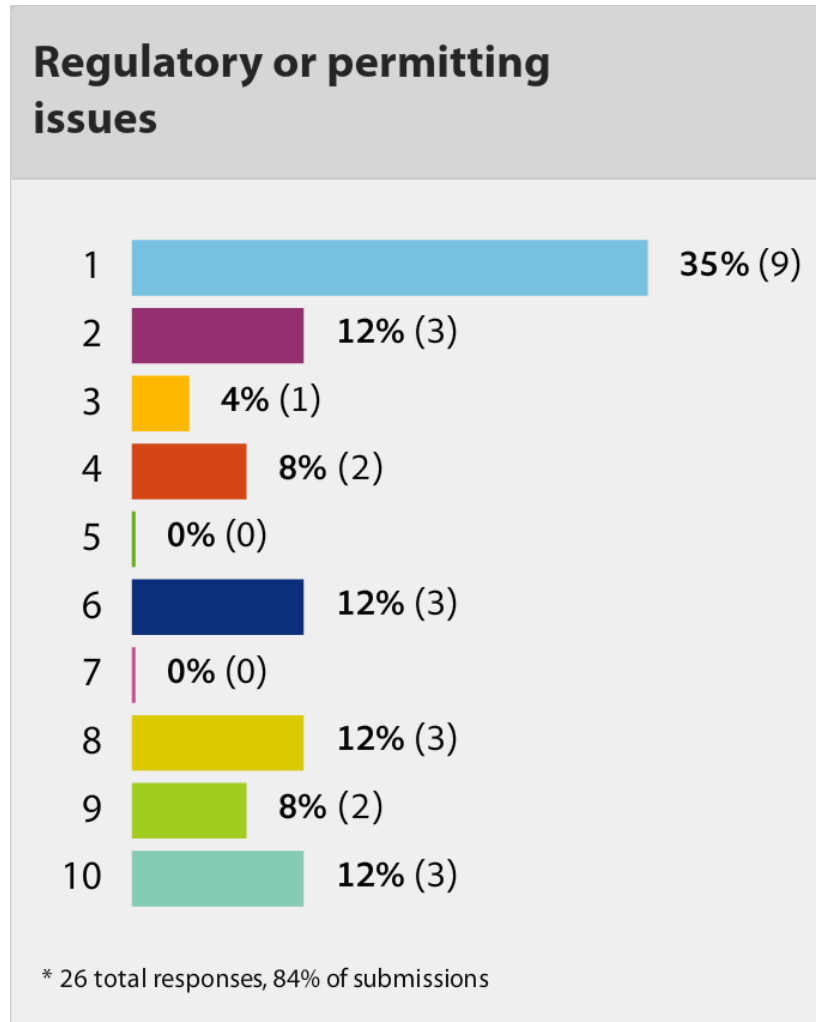


Farmer Pirates purchased a pick-up truck and trailer with \$15,000 from Kickstarter

Government assistance needed to help with FINANCING

- “working capital and political buy in”
- “funded staff”
- “Investment in order to get up to a medium size hauling/education company.”
- “Financing for more machinery and labor.”
- “Need funding to acquire larger facility to accommodate demand.”
- “Grant programs designed to encourage onsite site-wide composting for schools and institutions”
- “Increased access to public funding to start pilot programs.”
- “Grants to build more bins, to pay people to turn piles and do collection work, for slightly larger sites to have machinery to turn, for anaerobic digestors.”
- “Training, and funding assistance for improved equipment that mitigates odor and vectors is a #1 priority.”
- “Define an appropriate scale and a financial structure that allows community-based composting to exist with paid staff.”
- “SITE PURCHASE and PREPARATION!”
- “testing of product (e.g., a fund to pay for expensive testing that small sites cannot afford, discounts from labs).”

Challenges: Rate 1 to 10 10 = worst challenge



Government assistance needed to help with REGULATIONS & POLICY

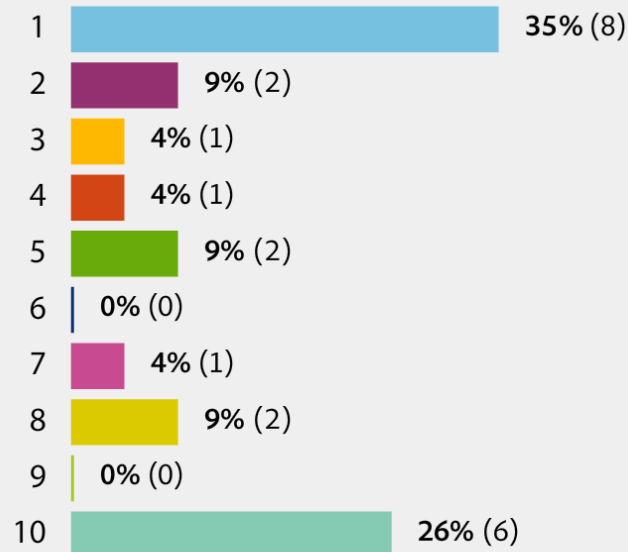
- “With public regulators, develop voluntary standards for operating a community compost site... avoid passage of unnecessary and potentially hindering new regulation... create a mechanism for distributing and monitoring compliance with standards while at the same time providing needed support and expertise for sites willing to honor the standards”
- “Local and state officials, such as those who regulate hauling of waste and environmental protection, need to interpret their mandates, or have their mandates changed, to actively support rather than impede community composters. Not only are exemptions needed, but active assistance is needed.”
- “If farmers could get more subsidies for [them] to benefit from land application compost”
- “Create more demand for finished product.”
- “Perhaps property tax abatements for undeveloped real estate converted to community compost operations.”

Assistance needed to help with TRAINING & STAFF

- “Training, and funding assistance for improved equipment that mitigates odor and vectors is a #1 priority. A trained composter knows the need for proper equipment and systems to ensure and odor free, vermin free operation.”
- “Compost operator training or other compost educational programs.”
- “trainings for community members to ensure they're making quality compost.”
- “Technical assistance/community educators”
- “For urban contexts the compost operator trainings have got to be turned inside out and upside down to recognize some realities about how different success looks in an urban context.”
- “Statewide Master Composters classes and certification for small scale thermophilic composting assistance and oversight.”

Challenges: Rate 1 to 10 10 = worst challenge

Lack of adequate equipment designed for small-scale operations



1 additional choice not shown

* 23 total responses, 74% of submissions

- “Design appropriate technologies for medium scale composting, cost effective, low cost, durable, has capacity”
- “Set up an engineering ‘challenge’ for new technology (using materials readily available from Home Depot), 60 days or less, no electricity, no moving parts, use in vacant lot until developed, flexible, transportable, 12 months a year, insulated”
- “With the private sector, work with industry partners, to address needs for: more aptly sized and powered equipment (e.g., effective human-powered equipment, smaller and affordable/donated industrial equipment, shared-equipment cooperatives)”
- “We need development of equipment appropriate to our scale, e.g., bicycle-powered sifters and shredders.”

Join the community composting movement

BIOCYCLE PRESENTS

cultivating community composting 2014

This all day event brings together composters to network, share best practices, and build support for community scale composting systems and enterprises.

when: Saturday, October 25

10:00 AM – 4:30 PM

where: Community Center at Clifton Park Baltimore,
MD 21213

Co-Organizers



Civic Works



Resource Documents
Community Composting
Articles

Cultivating Community Composting 2014 —

The second national forum on community composting is being held at the Community Center at Clifton Park in Baltimore, Maryland.

www.biocycle.net/communitycomposting/

Email: communitycomposting@ilsr.org

ILSR

INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance

Contact

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