



What Is Community Composting?

Organics are one of the few materials that can be entirely managed locally. Changing how we see these materials – from waste to resource – they become a valuable asset that can serve the community and support local food systems.

Ranging greatly in size (from 10 to 20,000 square feet), community composting is often volunteer run, or managed as part of an on-farm system or by non-profits. Focused on managing organics locally and producing compost for local use, in both urban and rural settings, the emphasis is on promoting community partnerships and connections.

Community composting provides an essential role in the evolution of food scrap diversion from landfills, normalizing composting at all scales – from backyard to commercial.

Benefits of Community Composting

- Increased Local Economic Vitality
- Community Engagement
- Improved Soil Health
- Reduced Storm Water Runoff & Pollution Mitigation
- Waste Reduction
- Climate Protection
- Applied Learning

Adapted from Community Composting Done Right, ILSR, 2019.

Community composting sites vary in:

- Mission
- Size
- Affiliations
- Participants

Where does it take place?

- Community gardens
- Schools
- Public parks
- Farms
- CSAs
- Food shelves
- Libraries
- Co-housing developments
- Camps
- Abandoned lots
- And more

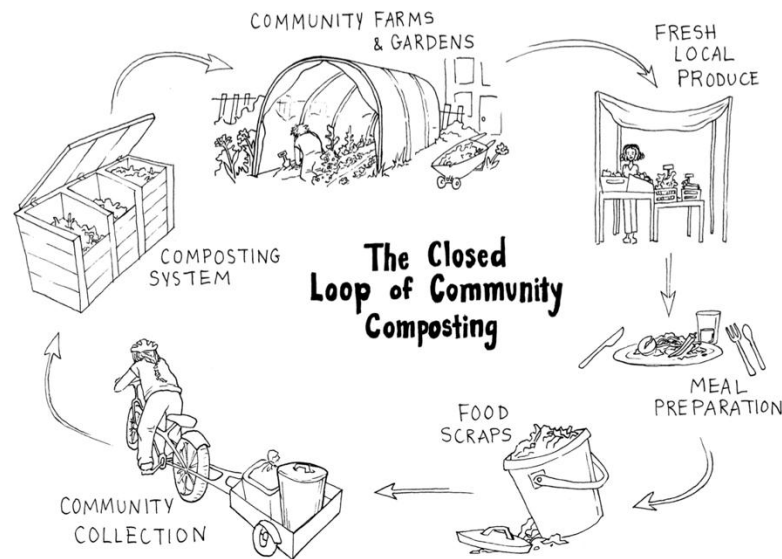
Creating a Community of Composters

Backyard composters are part of the composting infrastructure within a community; and many act as compost champions within their communities, playing important partnership roles, and in many cases are directly engaged in both backyard and community composting activities.

Backyard and community composters together are normalizing local management of organics and promoting the importance of soil health.

“While composting as a group can sometimes be more challenging, the results are richer than doing it on my own. The increased volume makes it easier to get up to temp, and we pull from our collective experience to keep the system working well.”

– From a community compost co-manager in Vermont



Source: L. Bilsens Brolis, B. Platt, *Community Composting Done Right: A Guide to Best Management Practices*, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 2019 (www.ilsr.org/composting-bmp-guide).



Photo cr. Red Hook Farm, Brooklyn, NYC



Healthy City Youth Farm, Hunt Middle School, Burlington, VT. Photo cr. VCGN

Other Community Composting Tip Sheets to consult: [Science of Composting](#); [Volunteer Engagement & Retention](#).

Written with funding from a USDA Rural Utilities Solid Waste Management Grant. NERC is an equal opportunity employer and provider.