

Preconference Workshop Community Food Scrap Composting—Path To Success

This is designed to be a hands-on training for community food scrap composting. The technical aspects of community composting to be covered include: 1) Siting and planning small scale operations— locations include community gardens, schools, businesses, churches, food pantries, farms, recreational areas, housing developments; 2) “System Support”—compost team/staff recruitment, retention, duties, and training; communication (team, site, signage, etc.); identifying community or neighborhood resources, strengths, opportunities, and challenges; building community support and good neighbor practices; and fundraising; 3) Community Scale Compost Systems—from tumblers to worm bins; 4) Sizing operations to stay within state regulations and how this translates into site and system needs, capacity, volunteer/staff duties, etc.; 5) Sourcing the right materials; and 6) Ensuring success: BMPs – fromsite inspection to process management and maintenance.

Community composting specifics for urban and rural/small town will be integrated into the discussion.

Instructors: Athena Bradley and Natasha Duarte

Duration 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM with one hour for lunch (not included)

CCOM™/CCP™ PDHs: 7

Fee: \$310 for USCC members, \$385 for nonmembers

Agenda:

Community Composting Overview

- Defining community composting across different scales
- Why Community Composting?
- Community Composting and Community Resilience
- Planning for Success

System Support: The People

- Compost team/staff building and retention
- Communication
- Community Support
- Fundraising for community composting
- Use of compost to benefit communities? Different ways people use the compost – divide up – community goals? Keep for garden? Be clear, plan ahead, set goals, how to divide fairly? What are the regulations for this?

Community Compost Operation Logistics

- Small Scale Food Scrap Composting Systems
- Going with the Flow – setting up your community compost operation

Feedstocks

- Sourcing food scraps & carbon
- How will you collect? Drop-off, Pick-up

Best Management Practices

- Feedstocks and overview of recipe development
- Composting Systems & Operation
- Process management
- Recordkeeping Essentials & Why
- Troubleshooting – What to do...When?
- Emergency plans, Closure plan

Expanding Your Community Compost Site

- Build slowly!
- How do you expand your capacity? Open up to a wider community to gain new generators, hauling, other?
- Business/Expansion plan? Planning horizon?
- Operating according to your limitations – what is your limiting factor – human capacity, volume, feedstock, space, funding/resources, regulatory environment
- Avoiding team burnout
- “Hub and spoke” – collection and multiple community site options

Teaching Methods

Teaching methods will include PowerPoint presentations, large and small group discussion/roundtable opportunities, role playing and team building exercises.

Expected outcomes

Participants will gain substantial knowledge of how to successfully operate a community-scale food scrap composting operation. They will understand the keys to success, best management practices, the regulatory environment, team building, and more. We will also explore the “human-side” of community composting—team building and retention, assessing resources and system support, goal setting, and, developing and supporting community partnerships. Participants will understand how community composting can fit into their community, whether urban, small town, rural, or Tribal and how it can work in tandem with home composting, farm-based composting, and even larger scale compost operations. We will explore ways to grow community composting sites, managing issues that arise, creative funding, and growing community composting.

Instructors

Athena Lee Bradley is the Programs Manager for Windham Solid Waste Management District and a contractor for the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC). Athena organizes and is an instructor for organics and food scrap management, composting, and manure management trainings, as well as provides technical assistance to businesses, public agencies, schools, communities, and households. She has written several organics management guidance documents and numerous other instructional materials. Athena attended the Maine Compost School and other compost operator trainings; she has a M.S. in

Environmental Studies and M.A. in Environmental Policy. She is currently the Project Lead for NERC's USDA Rural Utilities Services funded project – "Implementing Rural Community Composting in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont."

Natasha Duarte is the Director of the Composting Association of Vermont (CAV). She represents CAV in policy initiatives, develops and leads outreach and education initiatives, and promotes the production and use of compost as vital to soil health through practices that contribute to water quality, plant vigor, and environmental resilience. Community scale composting was the cornerstone of Natasha's Peace Corps work in Senegal, West Africa, where she helped farmers reclaim land from termite mounds and turn the poorest areas of their fields into the most productive. She is currently contributing to a USDA Rural Utilities Services funded project – "Implementing Rural Community Composting in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont." She has been a backyard composter for over 20 years and has helped family members and friends begin composting. She has an M.S. in Soil Science from N.C. State University and a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Vermont.