NERC NORTHEAST RECYCLING COUNCIL

COMMUNITY COMPOSTING TIPS

Site Design – Going With The Flow

Regardless of how big or small your site, putting some thought into how you set it up can make a huge difference in the ease of use for site participants. You need to consider tool storage, carbon storage, access to water, high-flow areas (for example, food scrap drop off), potentially parking, and more. Below are some tips for how to set up your site to make it easier to "go with the flow".

#1–Material Receiving Area:

Whether site members are just dropping off their food scraps, for compost stewards to integrate into the system, or adding them directly into the system themselves – having an easily accessible and organized place for materials intake is important! This area ideally has space for carbon storage (sawdust, leaves, straw, etc.) and a log book.

- ✓ If people are dropping off their food scraps, be sure to have (a) a scheduled time, with volunteers on hand to help, or (b) well-trained members & easily accessible carbon to cover food scraps with, as well as a log book for noting the time, date, & volume dropped off.
- ✓ If people are adding their food scraps directly into the system, this area should also include a mixing area (#2).

#2–Mixing Area:

This is where the "feedstock", or organic materials, are prepared and mixed according to the recipe for the site's system. This area should include easy access to tools for chopping and shredding food scraps or carbon that are too large for the system (remember: surface size helps the micro-organisms do their jobs!), as well as the log book.

#3–Active Composting Area:

Whether tumbler, bin, or pile–this is where the action happens! Signage is REALLY important, to keep everyone up-to-date on which tumbler chamber, bin, or pile to add to. Depending on your system management structure, you may want a separate log book here for tracking inputs, moisture, temperature, and any other management notes (when material was moved, any odor or vector concerns, etc.).

Image used with permission from the NYC Compost project Master Composter Course Manual. Chapter 4: Site Design & Management. Page 4-14.

FIND MORE RESOURCES ONLINE AT
nerc.org/nerc-resources

PROJECT PARTNERS:
CAV Composting Association of Vermont
Vermont Community Garden Network
Vermont Master Composter – Sponsored by UVM Extension Master Gardener and Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Cornell University
UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources – Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

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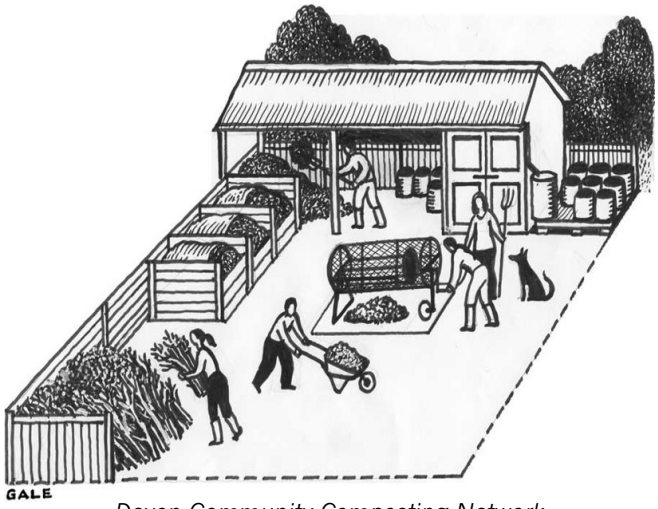
#4–Finishing/Curing:
Some people forget this stage, but it's really important! After the active (thermophilic) stage is complete, compost needs to cure, or stabilize. This can happen in a tumbler chamber, bin, or pile, depending on site design. Remember to make sure that curing compost is located in a place where there's no chance of it being contaminated by leachate (or contact fluid) from the active compost.

#5–Screening:
Once the compost is fully cured (we recommend doing a germination or bag test), the material is ready to be sifted. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and the goal is to remove any material that has not fully decomposed (like avocado pits or woody materials that take longer to decompose), or inorganic materials (like produce stickers that may have slipped through).

#6–Finished compost:
Don't forget that you'll need a place to store finished compost until it can be distributed or used on site.



Devon Community Composting Network
http://www.dccn.org.uk/in-the-community

Establishing a Site
- ✓ Secure a location
- ✓ Develop a site plan
- ✓ Get permission, if needed
- ✓ Discuss with neighbors
- ✓ Form a team
- ✓ Fundraise/asset development
- ✓ Building or obtaining bins
- ✓ Start small!

General Site Layout
- ✓ Year-round accessibility
- ✓ Access to water is a necessity
- ✓ Shrubbery, fencing, or cover to block wind
- ✓ Insulation for winter
- ✓ Sit bins/piles on ground, grass or vegetated area
- ✓ Tumblers can be mounted

Other community compost tip sheets and resources to consult: *Regulatory Overview*; *Good Neighbor Policy*; *Issues & Priorities*