

# Student Compost Cooperative – Making Campus More Sustainable

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## Abstract

Composting is a natural process in which microorganisms break down important available nutrients in various organic wastes including our food scraps, yard waste, animal manure, and garden waste. Once broken down, the recycled product can be used as a nutritious soil amendment in a garden without the use of commercial fertilizers. Composting helps to build organic matter in the soil which retains moisture, prevents diseases, and balances pH levels. Additionally, recycling our organic wastes reduces the amount that accumulates in large landfills which release greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change across the globe. Composting provides the opportunity for our communities to create a more sustainable future by decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels for waste management and fertilizer production. The **Student Compost Cooperative (SCC)** is a student-led organization established through the UF Soil and Water Sciences Department designed to provide students, faculty, and locals with the ability to compost their own organic wastes at our facility at the *Bioenergy and Sustainable Technology Lab* and learn the importance of composting. Through social media, the SCC coordinates and holds various educational workshops and hands-on events with the composters. Garden plots are available for those interested in starting to grow their own crops. The SCC aims to encourage and educate students on how they can contribute to making campus a more sustainable community.

## Introduction

The Student Compost Cooperative (SCC) is a student-run program that encourages composting through outreach and provides hands-on learning experiences with compost at the BioEnergy and Sustainable Technology Laboratory.

Students and faculty can compost their own food waste and in exchange receive the finished compost for their own gardens.

## Composting Benefits

- Enriches soils with nutrients and organic matter
- Retains soil moisture and helps prevent nutrient leaching
- Decreases landfill waste and methane emissions
- Provides a sustainable alternative to commercial fertilizers



Hands-on experience at the SCC



Cabbage grown with SCC compost



It's never too young to start composting!

## Objective

The Student Compost Cooperative aims to create a sustainable UF Community through composting food waste, organic gardening, and educational outreach.



## Compost Process

### Key factors to an efficient compost:

- **Temperature:** Warm temperatures allow microbial organisms to thrive
- **Substrate:** Organic matter including food scraps, paper, cardboard, coffee grounds
- **Moisture:** Slightly moist
- **Carbon:** Adding leaves and other carbon-rich materials provides bulk density and air spaces
- **Mixing:** Decomposition occurs faster by distributing substrates and oxygen to the microbes



## Closed Loop System



## SCC Activities

### SCC Field Day

- Educate students and faculty on the importance of composting
- Show how to compost food scraps, grass clippings, and garden waste
- Sift compost
- Adding compost to garden soil
- Planting and harvesting in garden beds



### Campus Earth Day

- On-campus event with various organizations promoting sustainability
- Inform students where and how they can compost their food scraps



## Get Involved!

**Connect with us** for more information on events!

**Visit our website:**  
<http://biogas.ifas.ufl.edu/SCC>



**Facebook:** UF Student Compost Cooperative



### Attend our events:

Take a look at our schedule and mark your calendars.



## Location

**Come to the facility!**  
2610 SW 23<sup>rd</sup> Terrace  
Gainesville, FL 32608.

The SCC is an outdoor facility located in the UF Energy Research and Education Park, directly east of the Bioenergy and Sustainable Technology Laboratory.

