

# The Student Compost Cooperative and Nutrient Recycling Education



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## Introduction

Too often organic by-products are needlessly wasted. Paper, plastic, metal, and glass are not the only materials that can be recycled – foodscraps can be easily managed to return essential plant nutrients to our production system.

## Overview

The **Student Compost Cooperative (SCC)** is a campus outreach program established by Dr. Ann C. Wilkie (Soil and Water Science Department, UF-IFAS) that encourages responsible Nutrient Recycling through hands-on education and practical demonstration. The SCC practices the various methods of composting by offering a simple exchange: drop off foodscraps at the BioEnergy and Sustainable Technology Laboratory and take home finished compost that can be used for vegetable gardens and potted plants. By teaching the basic principles of composting, the SCC promotes sustainable Nutrient Recycling habits that can be implemented by anyone, anywhere.

## Objectives

- Educate students and community members about why Nutrient Recycling is important
- Educate about how to implement Nutrient Recycling practices
- Provide facilities for composting
- Provide facilities for organic gardening



## Quick Facts

- In 2012 about 40 million tons of compostable organic material was sent to landfills or incinerators, accounting for approximately 30% of unrecovered waste <sup>1</sup>.
- Almost any kitchen waste that does not contain meat or oils can be composted, including: fruits and vegetables, eggshells, coffee grounds and filter, and nonwaxy paper products.
- Compost is a nutrient-rich, organic soil amendment that helps retain moisture <sup>2</sup>.

## Outreach

Monthly workshops are about various Nutrient Recycling practices. These meetings provide information sessions, promotion of local organizations, and opportunities for networking/socialization.

**The SCC has an open door policy, encouraging participation by anyone at any time.**

Web-based resources have also been pivotal in providing education. The Biogas website as an extension of IFAS in the main online site for answering many compost-related inquiries. Social media has also played an important role.

## References

1. United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2013). *Municipal solid waste generation, recycling, and disposal in the united states: Facts and figures for 2011*. ( No. EPA530-F-13-001). Washington, DC: United States Environmental Protection Agency. Retrieved from [http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/MSWcharacterization\\_508\\_053113\\_fs.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/municipal/pubs/MSWcharacterization_508_053113_fs.pdf)
2. <http://biogas.ifas.ufl.edu/SCC/composting.asp>

## Acknowledgements

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