

The Student Compost Cooperative — Cultivating Compost Collaboration

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Abstract

Composting is an organic and microbial process that transforms food waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment. Unfortunately, a majority of food waste is directed to landfills or wastewater treatment plants, whereby landfills emit greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and wastewater treatment plants lose valuable energy to manage the food waste. By composting, society can grow beneficial microorganisms, boost soil aeration, improve water retention, provide valuable nutrients for plants, and curb environmental damage. Established by the Soil and Water Sciences Department, UF-IFAS, the Student Compost Cooperative (SCC) acts as a cross-disciplinary education and outreach program to develop sustainable practices amongst the campus and community population. Through lectures and orientations, participants can engage with and learn about the composting process as it relates to their actions and the actions of fellow participants. Furthermore, garden plots are also available for participants to use the compost and grow fresh produce. As a result, the SCC is cultivating a collaborative effort across the academic spectrum to compost and engage in sustainable practices. Students and staff are welcome to join the SCC in the effort to make the Gainesville area more sustainable by working together and composting their food waste.

Introduction

The SCC is an educational and outreach program that encourages the Gainesville community to engage in sustainable compost practices. All students, staff, and members of the Gainesville community are encouraged to join and learn about how to compost.

Objective

The SCC strives to foster sustainable practices and encourage the Gainesville community to become more sustainable by providing composting facilities, organic gardening plots, and educational opportunities.

Why Should We Compost?

- Reduce methane/greenhouse gas emissions from landfills
- Conserve valuable energy for water treatment plants
- Enrich soil with nutrients and organic matter
 - Improves water retention
 - Prevents nutrient leaching
 - Grow microorganisms
 - Aerates the soil
- Encourages the adoption of other sustainable practices

What Does Compost Need?

- Nitrogen – Food Waste
- Carbon – Shredded Paper/Cardboard/Dead Leaves
 - Eliminates excess moisture
 - Provides additional air space for microbes
- Moisture – 50% - 60% Moisture Content
 - Akin to a wrung-out sponge
- Aeration/Mixing – Microbes gain access to new material and air
- Temperature – 104° to 140°F | 40° to 60°C
 - Kills pathogenic microorganisms
 - Indicates a healthy compost



Features of the SCC

- ✓ 3 Active Compost Bins
- ✓ 3 Compost Curing Bins
 - ✓ Compost is available for members to use
- ✓ Garden Plots
- ✓ Container Gardens
- ✓ Rainwater Harvesters
 - ✓ Preferred method of watering the plots
- ✓ Greenhouse
 - ✓ Stores supplies for composting and gardening
- ✓ Toolshed
 - ✓ Stores gardening tools for gardening/general use
- ✓ Herb Table
- ✓ Butterfly Garden
- ✓ Vermiculture Composting Bins
 - ✓ Educates members about worm-based natural decomposition



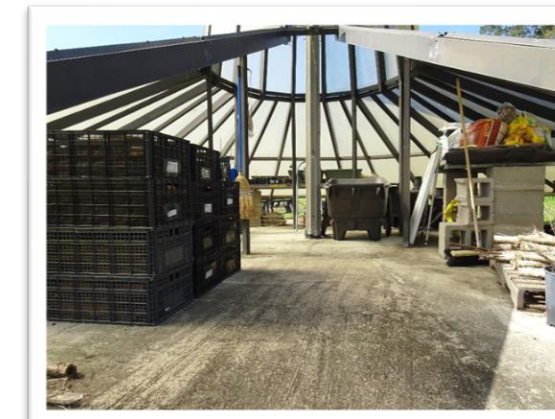
Active Compost Bins



Gardening Plots and Greenhouse



Rainwater Harvesters for Sustainable Gardening

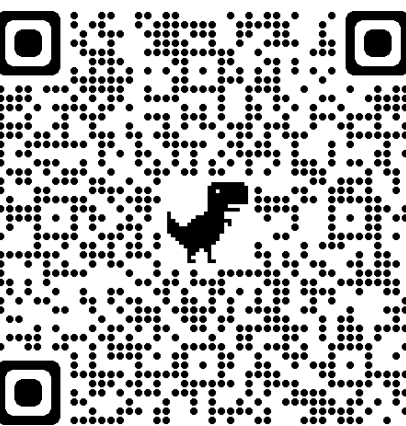


The Compost Process



Contact Information

Visit our website:
<http://biogas.ifas.ufl.edu/SCC/index.asp>
Facebook:
UF Student Compost Cooperative
Instagram: @uf.scc



Directions:

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