



## Going Green Makes Sen\$e

### *Consider Including Food Scraps In Your Office Recycling Program*



Those of us who work in an office probably eat at least one meal there, and sometimes the leftovers are compostable. Since home composting has become more popular, workers are now starting to ask if they can compost at the office, too. In addition to increasing recycling, removing food scrap from the regular trash can also save money in waste disposal fees.

If your office currently does not recycle the basic items, **do not start** an office food scrap composting program just yet! Start a foundation and mindset for employees by establishing a recycling program for the bottles, cans, paper, etc. and then, explore food scrap recycling. Here are some questions to get you thinking about beginning composting at work.

#### **Is a food scrap composting program right for your office?**

Maybe. The first question to ask is “If we start collecting food scraps, do we have a place where it can be taken to get recycled/composted?” If the answer is “no”, then you should not start collecting food scraps until you can answer “yes” to that question. This may mean finding an off-site composting facility that will accept your scraps and a means by which to get them there, or establishing a compost area on-site.

#### **Where will you bring your food scrap?**

Bringing food scrap off-site is probably the best answer for larger offices and those with cafeterias. However, the options are limited at this time. There are presently only two privately operated permitted/approved compost sites in CT that can accept source separated food scrap (i.e. no trash included). Those sites are located in New Milford (New Milford Farms) 203-210-0250 and Ellington (GreenCycle) 860-674-8855, ext. 304. As demand increases, the infrastructure should expand with more facilities. Food scrap generators near the border should check for options in neighboring states.

If you are in the vicinity of those facilities, contact them to make sure that they have room for your materials. Ask what they will accept, their quality standards, and how they want it delivered. Then, work with your food service provider and trash hauler to arrange for collection and transportation. The cost may be prohibitive if long-distance hauling is required.

#### **Could you manage on-site composting?**

On-site composting may be possible for smaller offices (less than 30 people) or those located in rural areas with grounds on which to place a compost bin/area. It has also been successful at schools, universities and prisons. These larger on-site composting areas should be self-contained or under cover (pole barn, clear-span fabric buildings, etc.) to avoid excessive runoff of nutrients and for better process control. A home-made bin, commercially purchased home compost bins, or an automatic self-contained kitchen compost unit may suffice for small offices. Very small volumes can be handled in a worm composting bin, although these are sometimes a challenge to maintain without attracting flies.

All the best management practices for composting should be followed to avoid creating odors, runoff, and attracting flies. The beauty of on-site composting is that the resulting compost can be used in your office landscaping, or given to staff for their own gardens.

For more information and a longer version of this fact sheet, contact:  
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