



Chicago Conservation Corps Speakers Bureau
Backyard Compost Bin Presentation

5 "Must Have" Talking Points

THEME: Composting is an effective waste reduction option.

1. 34 million tons of food waste is generated in the US annually.
2. Composting can reduce your waste by 30%.
3. **Composting** is a common technique that assists the natural process of decomposing organic waste by combining **Air, Water, Nitrogen (greens** –fresh yard waste and food scraps) and **Carbon (browns** -dried yard waste, straw) in a compost bin. A few months later, compost is created. Compost is a nutrient -rich soil conditioner that can improve soil quality and enrich plant growth that reduced the need for chemical fertilizers.
4. Chicagoans composted over 4,000 tons of food scraps in 2010.
5. Compost bins do take some management to ensure proper decomposition takes place. Here are some management tips:
 - Make sure that all "greens" are covered with a thick layer of dried "browns". This will eliminate any smell or interest from vermin.
 - Make sure the top lid and the front doors for harvesting are securely closed at all times. This will prevent any opportunity for vermin to enter.
 - Check on your compost bin weekly. Depending on the weather, more or less water may be needed to help the decomposition process.
 - Expect to find earth worms and pill bugs in your compost bin. These organisms are essential to the decomposition process.

Tips for Adapting the Presentations Outlines to Table Events

The presentation outlines have been designed for a more formal community presentation. Adapt the activities in the outline so that you can still engage your audience and inspire action.

Bring raffle tickets so that one lucky person can go home with a compost bin and put what you have taught them into action.

Backyard Compost Bin Demonstration

- Examples of "browns" and finished compost will be included in the tool kit. Please bring your own examples of "green"(food scraps).
- Identify the key components of the compost bin:
 - The top lid that screws on tightly. Use this to deposit browns and greens into the bin.
 - The front door that slides shut. Use this to harvest the finished compost.
 - The base grate and pegs that secure the bin upon a permeable surface like grass.
- There are several types of compost bin models. Rebates are applicable to the model of their choice.
- Talk about the various uses of compost for edible plants, ornamental plants and houseplants.