

Scaling up Composting in the Charlotte, NC Region

Anne Bedarf

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Did you hear?

The U.S. has achieved a 90% recovery rate through composting all food waste, yard waste, and compostable packaging!

APRIL FOOLS!

But...we will get there eventually!



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GreenBlue[®] is a nonprofit that equips business with the science and resources to make products more sustainable.



The Sustainable Packaging Coalition

- An industry working group of approx. 200 from across the packaging supply chain
- Inspired by a vision of more sustainable material flows for all packaging through better packaging and system design
- Increasing understanding of sustainability issues related to packaging through education
- Develop tools and resources to facilitate more sustainable packaging solutions and systems
- FREE a la carte municipal membership



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optimize
resources



responsible
sourcing



material
health



resource
recovery

Scaling up Composting in the Charlotte, NC Area



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Why Charlotte?

- Established composting infrastructure at Earth Farms
- EPA Region IV SMM grant
- State and County support
- University experience and interest—
Infrastructure, Design, Environment
and Sustainability Center (IDEAS)
- Elemental Impact work in
malls / food courts



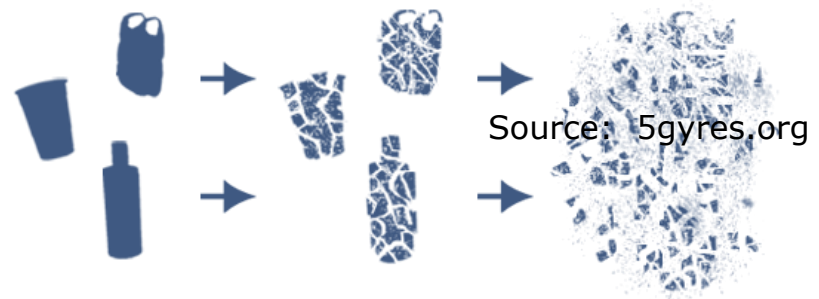
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Biodegradable ≠ Compostable

- **Degradable:** a substance will fragment through physical or photochemical means.
- **Biodegradable:** a substance will fragment and those fragments are consumed by microorganisms as a food & energy source and converted to carbon dioxide, water & humus.



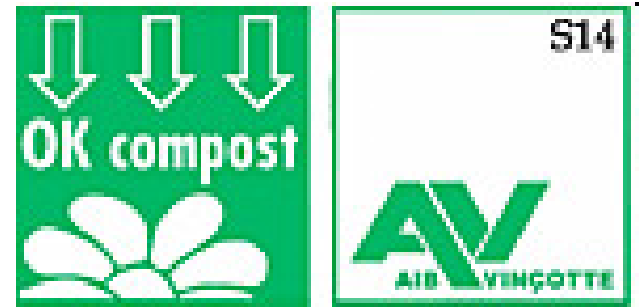
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Certified Compostable

Industrial composting:
ASTM Intl. Standards
BPI Certification
Specific composters

Backyard composting:
Belgian standard only



Outcome 1: Improved Waste Diversion and Infrastructure

- Route optimization
- Participant recruiting, education and training
- Collection and processing



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Outcome 2: Food and Packaging Waste Characterization

- Analysis of the feedstock for percent (by weight) of food, packaging, and contaminants
- Evaluate training effectiveness
- Provide a baseline by which future organics management work can be assessed



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Outcome 3: Lessons Learned and Transferability Report

- Metrics reporting
- Demonstrate the feasibility of scaling up further
- Stimulate much broader and more extensive organics and packaging composting programs nationwide



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Work in Progress

- Recruitment materials & information packet
- *charlottecompost.org*
- Two blog articles
- Site visit in April



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Recruitment Mode

- Looking for a diversity of participants
 - Restaurants
 - Institutions
 - Schools
- **FUNDING** for set-up, first month fees, system set-up, training, ongoing consultation and troubleshooting if necessary



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Lessons Learned

- It's a process!
- A new way of thinking
- Spending time myth-busting about odor, pests, lack of space
- Economics
- Show the outcome/benefit of creating soil
- Peer consulting (and peer pressure)
- If Metro school can do it, anybody can!



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Thank you!

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