

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Home Composting Education Program (HCEP)

ANNUAL REPORT FY 09

This report summarizes the Home Composting Education Program activities from July 2008 through June 30, 2009.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

• **Personnel**

Jose Garcia joined the Home Composting Education Program as an Associate Management in February 2009. Sarah Smith continues to work ½ time for the Program. Brian Debasitis is working as Extra Help as the lead Bay-Friendly Workshop Instructor.

• **Volunteers**

To date, 329 Master Composter (MC) volunteers have been certified to teach home composting. About 65 volunteers are currently active contributing through workshops and monthly meetings. (The ten-week training consists of 50 hours of classroom time and field trips). MCs are asked to perform at least 50 hours of outreach and education within Santa Clara County within one year of graduation. Total reported volunteer hours to date since the program began in 1995 are 31,687 hours. 1,818 volunteer hours were reported in FY09. There was not a volunteer training in 2009.

• **Workshops and Other Outreach**

Workshops, worm composting classes, and events such as fairs, garden shows, special lectures, table displays and City Compost Bin Sales. Presentations on worm composting have been given at schools. Each participating classroom received a pound of redworms, a worm bin, and educational materials. New in 2009 we trained Bay-Friendly Instructors to teach 3 Bay-Friendly workshop topics. The first 3 topics were: Bay-Friendly Basics, From the Ground Up and Gardening to Manage Pests Naturally. Nine classes for scheduled for the calendar year 2009 in the Cities of San Jose, Palo Alto, Cupertino and Campbell.

In FY09 there were participants at our events as follows:

- 18 special lectures with attendance of 296
- 110 school presentations with attendance of 2,531
- 57 compost workshops with attendance of 1,914 (up 24% from FY08)
- 5 Bay-Friendly workshops with attendance of 78
- 1 teacher training with attendance of 21
- 39 table displays with attendance of 8,259
- 1,818 volunteer hours were donated during FY09

Rotline

One of the most important services that the program provides is staffing the compost rotline (408 918-4640) which is used to answer composting questions, troubleshooting with compost bins and worm bins, workshop registration, and Master Composter volunteer sign-ups. The Rotline takes on average 75 calls a week.

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Compost Bin Sales

Earth Machine compost bins, kitchen containers, compost thermometers, worm bins, worms and wing-digger compost turning tools are for sale by appointment at the HCEP office at the County Service Center at 1553 Berger Drive and at most compost workshops. In FY09

285 *Earth Machine* Compost bins were sold, 170 wing diggers, 100 thermometers, 164 compost buckets (kitchen container) and 298 worm bins and 13 # of worms.

Master Composter Volunteers assist cities with their bin sales. The Cities of Sunnyvale and Palo Alto offer residents the *Bio Stack* compost bin at a reduced price. The City of San Jose sells the *Bio Stack* and *Home Composter* compost bins and the *Wriggly Wranch* worm bin at a reduced price.

- **Continuing Education for Master Composters**

Education by expert guest speakers at Monthly Meetings
Monthly Email/Print Newsletter
Research / Resource Library
Network with other counties programs
Skills Survey

- **Demonstration Site**

The MCs maintain a composting demonstration site at Prusch Park in San Jose with about a dozen different working compost bins that have been donated by manufacturers. MC volunteers also maintain a *Bio Stack* compost bin at the Sunnyvale Community Center.

- **Advertising / Public Relations**

The ReduceWaste.org website lists upcoming workshops. City Contacts help to promote HCEP workshops by purchasing advertising space in local papers. The program buys some advertising.

Submitted by:

Sarah Smith
Management Analyst
1553 Berger Drive Building 1
San Jose CA 95112
408 918-4641