



Advancing Diverse, Locally-Based Composting in the Mid-Atlantic

Linda Bilsens Brolis
Institute for Local Self-Reliance

EPA Mid-Atlantic Summit
May 17th, 2023



COMMUNITY BROADBAND



Open Access Conduit in West Des Moines, Iowa Brings Google Fiber, Choice to City Residents

Karl Bode, February 21, 2023

ENERGY DEMOCRACY



Arizona Adopts a Useless Community Solar Policy

Maria McCoy, March 9, 2023

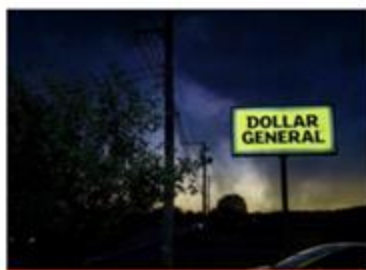
BUILDING LOCAL POWER



Toledo Takes Dollar Stores to Church

Luke Gannon, February 28, 2023

INDEPENDENT BUSINESS



New Report: The Dollar Store Invasion

Stacy Mitchell, February 28, 2023

COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY



Reintroduced Maryland Bill on Waste Reduction and On-Farm Composting



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Building Local Power Fighting Corporate Control



ILSR INSTITUTE FOR
Local Self-Reliance

Composting for Community

Learn more
at: [ilsr.org/
composting](https://ilsr.org/composting)

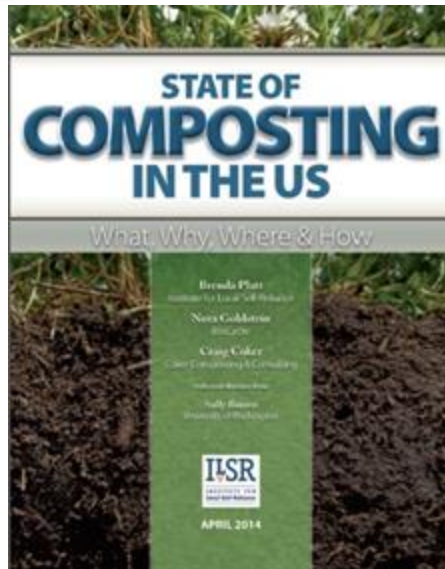
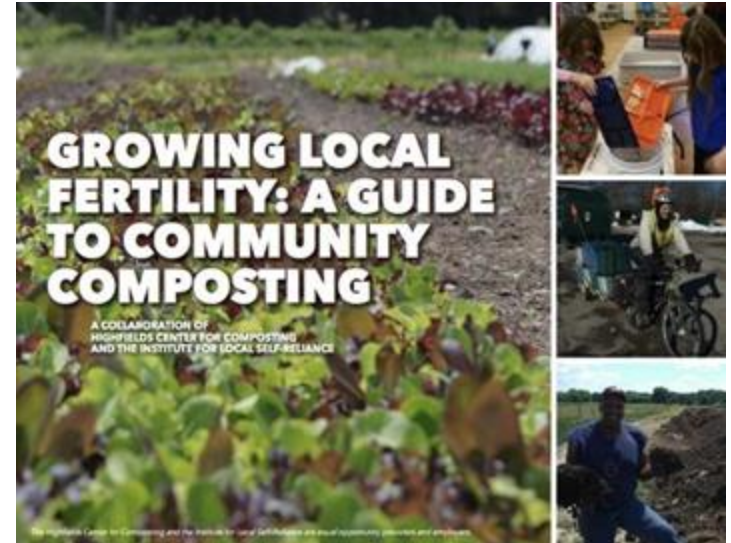
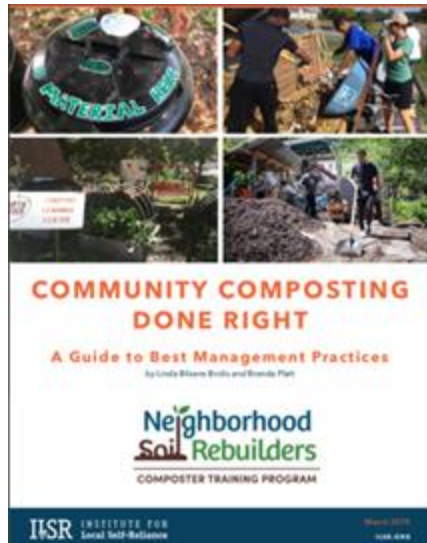


Composting for Community

- ▶ Community Composter Coalition
- ▶ Forums & networking
- ▶ Technical assistance & reports
- ▶ Infographics & templates
- ▶ Webinars & podcast
- ▶ Composter & Policy Map



Composting for Community Initiative





Webinar Resources: Successful Rat Prevention for Community-Scaled Composting



Webinar Resources: Two Business Models for Community Composting



Webinar Resources: Navigating Hauling Permits as a Community Composter



Webinar Resources: Using Bokashi in Community Composting — What, Why, How, Who



Webinar Resources: Composting with Worms on a Mid to Large-Scale — What, Why, How, and Who



Webinar Resources — Navigating COVID-19 for Small-Scale Food Scrap Collectors: Drop-off and Curbside



Webinar Resources: Community Compost Law & Policy



Webinar Resources: Entity Structure for Community Composters



Webinar Resources: Bike-Powered Food Scrap Collection — Spotlight on Equipment



Spurring On-Farm Composting



Advocating for Government Support

Part 1: Spotlight on New York City Contracts

May 4

Part 2: Food Scrap Collectors & Composters with Municipal Contracts

June 8

Part 3: Cities and Counties with Public-Private Partnerships

June 23

Part 4: A Menu of Options – Zoning, Grants, and Contracts

October 27



Composting for Community Map



ilsr.org/composting/map/



Composting for Community

Advancing local composting to create jobs, enhance soils, protect the climate, and reduce waste.

Community Composters | Training | Policies | On the Ground

FEATURED



ILSR's On-Farm Composting & Compost Use Webinar Series

Linda Bilsens Brolis, July 30, 2021

This webinar series features experts from across the industry and covers the ins and outs of on-farm composting and compost use, including setting up a composting area on your



ilsr.org/composting/

Peer Learning Community (PLC)

In-vessel ASP Systems



A Peer Learning Community Event led by Domingo Medina



Creative Solutions for Community Composting: On a Low-to-No Budget



A Peer Learning Community Event led by Michael Bradlee



The Johnson-Su Bioreactor



A Peer Learning Community Event led by Marie Hopkins

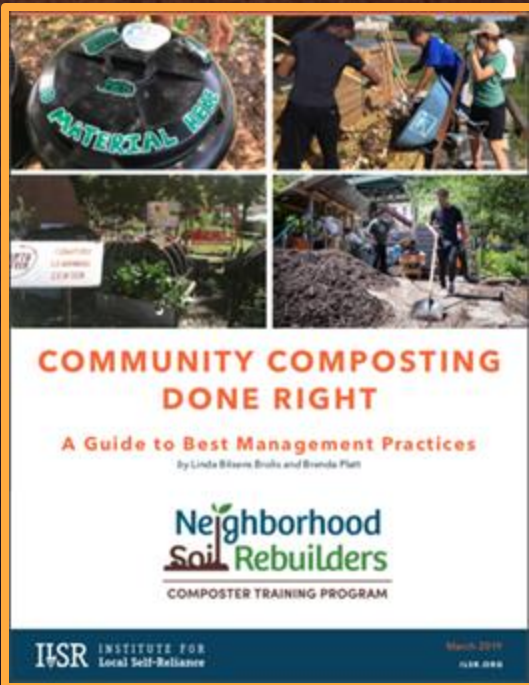


For members of the **Community Composter Coalition**

<https://ilsr.org/composting/community-composter-coalition/>

Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders

COMPOSTER TRAINING PROGRAM



ilsr.org/neighborhoodsoilrebuilders/



Community Composting 101

**Bulk discounts
& scholarships
available!**

Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders
Composter Training Program

Composting Initiative

Institute for
Local Self-
Reliance

Neighborhood
Soil Rebuilders
COMPOSTER TRAINING PROGRAM

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ilsr.org/community-composting-101-certificate-course

Community Composting 101

Online Certificate Course

1. The What & Why of Composting
2. Composting Systems & the Role of Community Composting
3. Composting Fundamentals & Recipe Development
4. Building a Compost Pile
5. Managing the Composting Process
6. Site Design & Management
7. Getting Started & Engaging the Community

Composting for Community

Advancing local composting to create jobs, enhance soils, protect the climate, and reduce waste.

[Community Composters](#) | [Training](#) | [Policies](#) | [On the Ground](#)

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COMPOSTING HOME PAGE

Composting Resources

Composting resources

Article (193)

Audio (33)

Charts & Graphs (5)

Composting Rules (54)

Podcasts (19)

Presentations (20)

Reports (37)

Video (6)

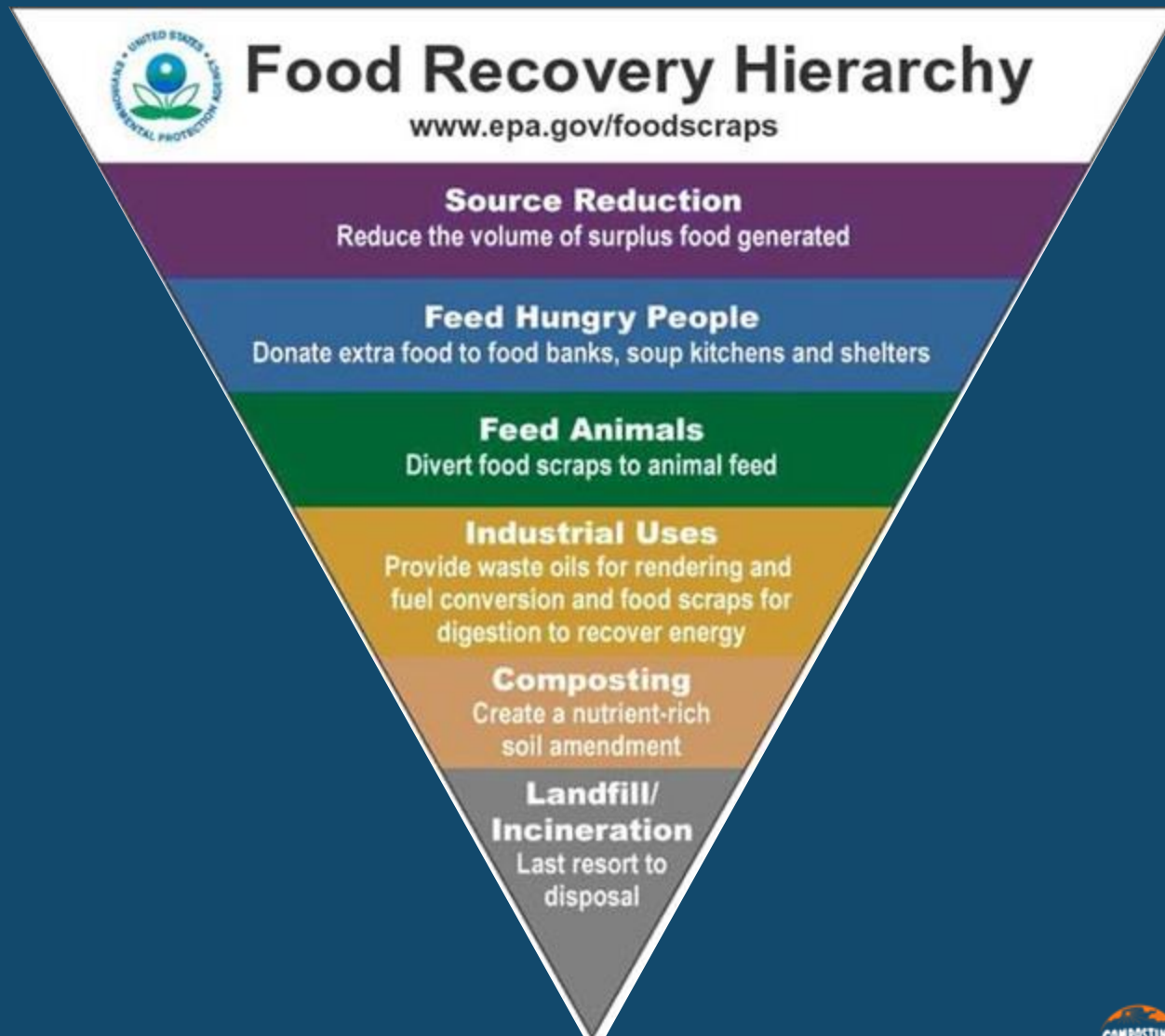
Webinars (26)

TOP RESOURCES

[Hierarchy to Reduce Food Waste](#)

ilsr.org/composting/

US EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy



What about local? Scale? Diversity?



**Hierarchy to
Reduce Food
Waste and Grow
Community**



Source Reduction

Prevention. Do not generate food waste in the first place! Reduce portions, buy what you need, and organize your fridge for optimal food usage.



Edible Food Rescue

Feed hungry people. Divert food not suitable for people to animals such as backyard chickens or to local farmers' livestock.



Home Composting

Composting in backyards or in homes.
Avoid collection costs!



Small-Scale, Decentralized

Onsite composting or anaerobic digestion, and community composters can accept material from off-site or simply process their own material.



Medium-Scale, Locally-Based

Composting or anaerobic digestion at the small town or farm scale. These systems handle typically between 10 and 100 tons per week and are designed to serve small geographic areas.



What is community composting?



COMMUNITY COMPOSTING

keeps the process and product as local as possible while engaging the community through participation and education



Why community composting?

- ▶ Provides composting capacity when none exists and is **cheaper, quicker**, and more in line with **community values** than large and industrial composting facilities.
- ▶ **Engages and educates communities** in composting and zero waste practices.
- ▶ **Increases demand** for and interest in composting.
- ▶ Enhances **local soils** and **local food production**.
- ▶ **Supports farmers** (urban and rural).
- ▶ **Empowers and strengthens communities** by bringing people together and providing useful skills and jobs training.
- ▶ Often **serves overlooked/under-resourced** communities.



Closing the loop!

Enhancing local soils to grow local food



DC DPR Community Compost Cooperative Network

harness volunteer power to create compost for community
gardens from local food scraps



Greenbelt (MD) Compost Cooperative

Volunteer-based collective

THE HOTS – all-volunteer managed, serving ~60 families through the 3-bin system

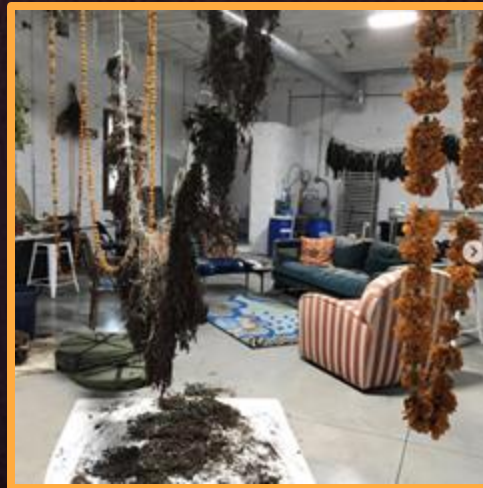


THE WIGGLERS – another volunteer group manages the vermicomposting system at the New Deal Café



Hidden Harvest Community Garden

Baltimore



Compost Crew - Rockville, MD

Curbside collection
in DC, MD & VA

Small-scale
composting site
on a local organic
farm

Committed to a
closed-loop system



Image sources:
Instagram @_compostcrew
<https://compostcrew.com/>



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Spurring On-Farm Composting

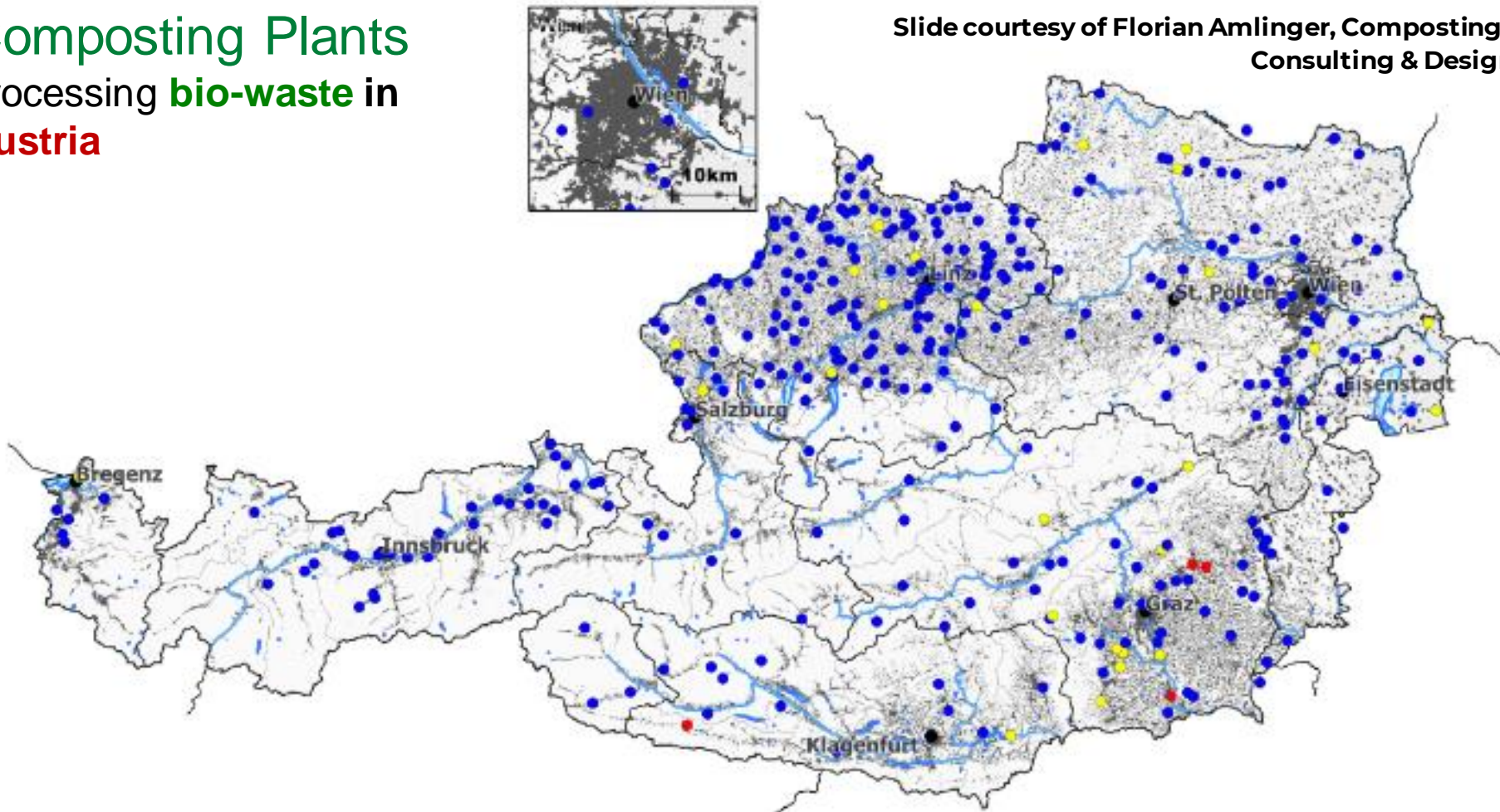


Compost Crew Compost Outpost at
ECO City Farms, Bladensburg, MD



Composting Plants processing **bio-waste** in **Austria**

Slide courtesy of Florian Amlinger, Composting-
Consulting & Design



| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Number of plants | 405 |
| Treated bio-waste & sludge | 1.3 Mt = 145 kg/person |
| Average treatment/plant | 3 200 t |

From total 1.6 Mt / 180 kg / person
source sep. org. waste

~ 22 000 / person / plant

Slide courtesy of Florian Amlinger,
Composting-Consulting & Design



Composting from 300 to 10,000 m³



Challenges Facing Community Composters



What can you do to help?



- ▶ Foster partnerships between community composters and government/broader composting sector
- ▶ Offer small-sized equipment and systems
- ▶ Support diversified infrastructure
- ▶ Support programs that source separate clean materials (to minimize contamination & produce high-quality compost)
- ▶ Provide technical assistance and tools for locally-based systems
- ▶ Support reasonable policies & regs
- ▶ Procure finished compost
- ▶ Support training & well-operated sites
- ▶ Contract with micro haulers and processors (urban & rural farmers too)
- ▶ Provide long-term access to land
- ▶ Fund community-based programs



What can you do to help?



Policy Recommendations for Municipal Governments when Partnering with Community-based organizations

- Ensure that the needs of environmental justice communities are made central in drafting composting policy
- Preference composting strategies that are decentralized, local, and community-based
- Consider supporting the existing efforts of community-based composting initiatives rather than centralized municipal operations or outsourcing to large corporations
- Adequately compensate community-based organizations – don't assume they will do this work purely out of love
- Draft MOUs with CBOs when partnering on grants to ensure they do not get cut out of programs after funding has been received
- Provide materials support – timely woodchip delivery

CBO = community-based organization

How to expand on-farm composting

- ▶ Clear definitions, rules, & pathways for scaling up responsibly
- ▶ Composting as an approved farm-related activity
- ▶ Source separation & keeping clean feedstocks clean!
- ▶ Banning organics from disposal
- ▶ Quality standards for compost & biosolids
- ▶ Technical training & assistance (for farmers, farm service providers, regulators)
- ▶ Demonstration projects, farmers learning from farmers
- ▶ Financial support for start up costs
- ▶ Public education & engagement





Thank you!

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