



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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SUSAN A. MAURIELLO, J.D., COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

PRESS RELEASE

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INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK

Santa Cruz County is excited to join the celebrations for this year's International Compost Awareness Week, May 7-13.

The County has long been at the forefront of diverting organic materials from landfills to more beneficial uses. Many local schools, restaurants, hospitals and more already separate their food waste for composting, and recent changes to state law will require many more to do so.

"Composting has so many benefits, it's almost miraculous," County planner Tim Goncharoff said. "Not only does it improve the health and fertility of the soil, but it saves water and keeps nutrients in the soil where they belong instead of wasting them in a landfill. Best of all, composting combats climate change by keeping carbon dioxide and methane out of the air. It's simple and easy, and one of the very best tools we have to fight global warming."

"Composting is really hot right now!" added Santa Cruz resident Cary Oshins, director of Education for the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation. "But really, we are seeing communities, cities and states across the country really step up their programs to divert compostables from the landfill". It's also the only recycling technology that can be practiced at home and have a significant impact, Oshins notes.

County businesses that want to learn more about composting options can contact GreenWaste Recovery for more information. Residents are eligible for discounts on home compost bins, available at local garden centers and hardware stores.



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Currently the food waste collected from county businesses and schools is sent to a facility in Marina for processing. However, the County is in planning stages for a new local composting facility.

"The state has a lot of regulations for composting," Goncharoff said, "so planning and permitting can take a long time. We hope to be up and running within two years. Up to 40 percent of all the trash we collect is compostable, so this is not only great for the environment, but it will extend the life of the County's last landfill by years."

In a move that has garnered nationwide attention, the County recently took a step toward more effective food waste collection by requiring that all products used in to-go food service be either recyclable or compostable. This means that things like plastic straws and stir sticks, polystyrene cup lids and plastic-lined hot cups are no more. The County has also banned polystyrene products, and other local jurisdictions are considering adopting the same rules.

"It just makes sense," Goncharoff said. "There are much better products and choices now, and they cost about the same. It's an easy adjustment."

More information about County composting programs is available at <http://www.dpw.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Home/RecyclingSolidWaste/Composting.aspx>. Contact County Planner Tim Goncharoff at Tim.goncharoff@santacruzcounty.us.

International Compost Awareness Week is sponsored by the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation. <http://compostfoundation.org/icaw>
Contact info for CCREF Education Director Cary Oshins at <http://compostfoundation.org/About/Trustees-Staff>

GreenWaste Recovery, Inc. <http://www.greenwaste.com/santa-cruz-county/residential-services>
Contact Sara Treat at streat@greenwaste.com.