

# Best Management Practices for Composting

## Rationale

The research, teaching and display greenhouses on the Ithaca campus generate a large amount of waste plant material, media and other organic waste. To reduce solid waste, organic waste is composted on site or through Farm Services in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Specially designed compost bins are used to store the waste and eliminate environmental impact from excess run-off due to

rain and snowmelt. Compost waste is removed upon request of greenhouse staff and efforts are made to prevent bins from being over-full, thus reducing environmental impact from odor and compost theft. Signs on compost bins describe appropriate and inappropriate compostable materials.

**Environmental Principle:** Environmental impact is reduced when organic waste is composted, compost is properly stored and promptly removed.

Operational Aspects	Environmental Assurance >>		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Overview</b>			
Emergency Preparedness	greenhouse staff educated on proper composting procedures	greenhouse staff and users educated on proper composting procedures	greenhouse staff & users educated on proper composting procedures
Environmental Awareness	staff are made aware of implications to surface and groundwater from excess runoff of compost material and fertilizers	staff are made aware of implications to surface and groundwater from excess runoff of compost material and fertilizers	staff are made aware of implications to surface and groundwater from excess runoff of compost material and fertilizers
Training	all employees are trained in the importance of proper composting procedures	all employees are trained in the importance of proper composting procedures and the prompt removal of full bins or pest-infested compostable material [refer to Composting Procedures document v. 10/19/06]	all employees are trained in the importance of proper composting procedures and the prompt removal of full bins or pest-infested compostable material [refer to Composting Procedures document v. 10/19/06]

Operational Aspects	Environmental Assurance >>		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Communication	greenhouse staff communicate proper composting procedures to greenhouse users; managers and staff communicate with CALS Farm Services for full bin removal	greenhouse staff communicate proper composting procedures to greenhouse users; managers and staff communicate with CALS Farm Services for full bin removal	greenhouse staff communicate proper composting procedures to greenhouse users; managers and staff communicate with CALS Farm Services for full bin removal
<b>Management</b>			
Compost Bin Construction & Design	steel; rust-resistant paint; elevated from the ground	steel; rust-resistant paint; elevated from the ground; sturdy easy-to-lift lid or stored under cover; periodic inspection and maintenance of bin	steel; rust resistant paint; elevated from the ground; sturdy easy-to-lift lid or stored under cover; periodic inspection and maintenance of bin
Signage	bins are posted for no trash and plastic; compost handling procedures centrally posted; trash, recycling cans and compost cans are labeled	bins are posted for no trash and plastic; compost handling procedures posted in several locations in the greenhouse and around bins; trash cans, recycling cans and compost cans are clearly labeled; bins are posted to inform public that removing material from compost bins for personal use is prohibited	bins are posted for no trash and plastic; compost handling procedures posted in several locations in the greenhouse and around bins; trash cans, recycling cans and compost cans are clearly labeled; bins are posted to inform public that removing material from compost bins for personal use is prohibited
Ventilation & Pest Control	bins are located outside of greenhouses and compost cans are covered when transporting to be emptied in compost bins	bins are located outside of greenhouses away from conference room, break room and classroom windows, and points of re-entry to the greenhouses, such as vents; compost cans are covered when transporting to be emptied in compost bins	bins are located outside of greenhouses away from conference room, break room and classroom windows, and points of re-entry to the greenhouses, such as vents; compost cans are covered when transporting to be emptied in compost bins
<b>Handling</b>			
Procedures	staff and greenhouse users are educated in all aspects of composting procedures	staff and greenhouse users are educated in composting procedures; composting posters are displayed; written compost procedures are incorporated into the Greenhouse Use Policy	staff and greenhouse users are educated in composting procedures; composting posters are displayed; written compost procedures are incorporated into the Greenhouse Use Policy

Operational Aspects	Environmental Assurance >>		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<b>Safety</b>			
Prevention of Biological & Chemical Exposures	staff, users and visitors are aware of safety hazards of removing material from compost bins for personal use through training and signage	staff, users and visitors are aware of safety hazards of removing material from compost bins for personal use through training and signage	staff, users and visitors are aware of safety hazards of removing material from compost bins for personal use through training and signage