

Waste Management/Recycling: Use and Compost Organic Waste

Strategy: Use immediately ripe produce in salad bars and other kitchen food prep; compost organic waste for use on site or by other local organizations/community gardens.

Relevant Store Scale/Type: S,M,L/New, Adapted, Existing

Initial Cost:

1. Compactor/collector and workstation collection containers.
2. Biodegradable lining bags, which are suggested for compost compactors.
3. Staff and management training is needed on the use and compost of organic waste.

Return on Investment:

1. Composting saves \$40/ton compared to the costs of trash disposal systems.
2. Disposal costs are now at \$80 to \$100/ton of waste and rising. Stores that use and compost organic waste can save dramatically. Supermarkets that compost even 5 to 10 tons of waste per week have been known to save \$10,000 to \$20,000/year.

Operator Benefits:

1. Using and composting organic waste will reduce refuse fees.
2. Re-using ripe produce increases profit.
3. When using a compactor for compost, compactor units store more material in less space.
4. Compost enriches soils and does not end up in landfills, therefore playing a valuable role in preserving natural resources.

Technical Considerations:

1. Composting systems require additional staff coordination.
2. Needs to be designed not to attract vermin.
3. Consider using industrial pulpers or water extractors with organic waste to minimize size and weight and then use/sell/give away for fertilizer.
4. Companies interested in composting have the choice of using a compacting system or a tote collection system.

Product/Manufacturer Suggestions, Resources & Examples:

Save money by composting article:

http://www.jgpress.com/archives/_free000544.html

Supermarket Composting handbook:

<http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/smhandbk.pdf>

Innovative Public – Private Recycling Partnership in Massachusetts

<http://www.astswmo.org/files/meetings/2005SWConference/Wolfe.pdf>

Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center

<http://www4.uwm.edu/shwec/publications/newsletters/pdf/December2006.pdf>