5th National Cultivating Community Composting Forum

8:15 AM – 6:15 PM, Tuesday, January 23rd, 2018
Room: Chastain H + I (6th Floor)

This Forum takes place as a [track on the first day](#) of the US Composting Council's International Conference and Trade Show, [COMPOST2018](#), January 23-25, Atlanta.

The Forum aims to:
- Foster greater interconnection between community/small-scale/urban composters and the USCC membership/conference attendees
- Show how community-scale composting fits in and complements the larger composting industry, both collection and processing, and both for individuals and organizations.
- Showcase the variety of models and innovative ideas that are growing from the ground up.
- Spur a community-based composter network that will stay connected following the conference.

Agenda

8:15 – 9:45 AM

Cultivating Community Composting Forum, Part 1

Welcome

Brenda Platt, [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#), [@ILSR](#) [@PlattBrenda](#)

Michael Roberts, [11th Hour Project](#), [@11thHourProject](#)

Overview & Introduction to Community Composting

Panel: Community Composting Policies, Permitting & BMPs

Community scale composting is an important facet of a healthy diverse composting infrastructure, and can bring public attention to composting as well as catalyzing larger scale municipal efforts. Yet, too often government policies hamper the ability of community composters to compete for contracts and funding. One plus for small-scale sites is that they are typically exempt from state permitting regulations. But this could lead to poorly operated systems, which might give community composting a poor reputation. Panelists will address what local government can do to support community scale efforts and identify best management practices to ensure well-operated sites. Experts from the US Composting Council will respond for a lively discussion.

Moderator: Jorge Montezuma, [Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles Co.](#), Whittier, CA, [@JLMontezuma](#)

Presenters:

Best Management Practices for Community Composters
Linda Bilsens, [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#), Washington, DC, [@ILSR](#), [@ltbinda](#)

Policy and Legal Obstacles to Community Composting
Kourtnii Brown, [Common Compost](#), Oakland, CA, [@CompostLocal](#)

Panel and Facilitated Discussion:

Matt Cotton, Integrated Waste Management Consulting, LLC, [@CompostPro](#)

Marcus Zbinden, Carver County, MN and USCC Legislative & Environmental Affairs Comm. (LEAC)

Angel Arroyo-Rodriguez, Ohio EPA, [@OhioEPA](#)

Renee Crowley, NYC Compost Project at [Lower East Side Ecology Center](#), [@lesecologyctr](#)

Cultivating Community Composting Forum, Part 2

Panel: Closing the Loop: Community-based Composting in Atlanta

Metro Atlanta's local food movement recognizes community-based composting as an opportunity to both divert food waste from landfills and to increase the supply of healthy soil to support community gardens and urban farms in producing more sustainably-grown local food. Learn from three local food movement experts on how their work plays a unique role in closing the loop between food production and food recovery. This panel will highlight Food Well Alliance's Working Table process, the Working Table's key learnings, and share insights on how the Food Well Alliance is using design thinking to increase community-based compost production within Metro Atlanta.

Moderator: Will Sellers, Food Well Alliance, Atlanta, @TheFoodWell

Panelists:

> The Role of Local Governments in Community-based Composting
> *Mario Cambardella, PLA APA, Urban Agriculture Director, City of Atlanta, Mayor's Office of Resilience, @ATLResilience*

> The Role of Urban Farms and Community-based Composting
> *Rashid Nuri, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Truly Living Well Center for Natural and Urban Agriculture, @TLWUrbanAg*

> The Role of Social Enterprises in Community-based Composting
> *David Paull, Founder and CEO, Compostwheels, LLC, @compostwheels*

Cultivating Community Composting Forum, Part 3

Panel: What Is Community Composting & Why Is It Important?

This panel will introduce the concept of community composting and its importance to the wider composting industry. Community composting takes many forms, but one thing community composters have in common is that they recycle material in the community in which it is generated, and the finished product benefits that community. Operations are structured as for-profits, non-profits, and worker owned cooperatives. Hauling can be done with bicycles or trucks, and piles may be turned with skid-steers or pitchforks. Some operations haul, others process, while others prioritize education. Minimizing the distance material travels isn't the only distinguishing characteristic of Community Composting. These groups also approach the work through the lens of food security, social justice, permaculture, deep ecology, and workplace democracy. They use grassroots tactics to build their customer base and education is a substantial part of their work. Their decentralized processing networks allow them to be effective in densely populated cities. Working to make composting common practice in cities and states whose governments don't currently provide incentives, Community Composters are the harbingers of larger programs. They prove that the market does indeed exist, and help to grow it through robust education programs.

Moderator: Brenda Platt, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, @ILSR @PlattBrenda

Presenters:

> Community Composting: One Mission, Many Forms
> *Michael Robinson, Rust Belt Riders, Cleveland, @RustBeltRiders*

> Small-Scale Hauler Benefits
> *Kristen Baskin, Let Us Compost, Athens, GA, @LetUsCompost*

> Partnerships between Bike and Truck Haulers, & Composting for Multi-Family Residents
> *Christi Turner, SCRAPS, Denver*

> Building Community Capital via Community Composting
> *Xavier Brown, Soilful City, Washington, DC, @SoilfulCity*