

Workshop for community participants

SUMMARY

Even in housing estates where people don't have gardens, composting is possible. This practice is called community composting. All you need for it is a garden composter, permission to place it, a community of composting enthusiasts and a bit of determination. In addition to the practical benefits of processing organic waste, community composting also strengthens good neighbourly relations, provides environmental education, and increases residents' interest in their surroundings.

WHO IS THE LECTURE INTENDED FOR?

All members of the community around the composter.

Examples of audiences: housing associations (SVJ), companies and institutions, schools, communities around municipal composters...

HOW LONG WILL THE WORKSHOP LAST?

- 120 minutes.
- Complete lecturers' medallions

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN IN THE LECTURE?

You will gain comprehensive information on how to start composting within a community. You will find the right set-up for your composting community to make composting enjoyable.

- We will discuss why it makes sense to deal with organic waste and what options we have.
- We will show you how to care not only for your

composter but also for the entire community.

- We will delve into the secrets of composting and give you an introduction on how composting works.
- We will discuss what belongs in the composter and what doesn't. What about compostable bags, for example?
- We will discuss suitable compost applications and storing.
- We will mention common mistakes in compost care.
- We will organise a small ceremony together to inaugurate our compost.
- We will of course have time for your questions.

DETAILS FOR THE LECTURERS

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and your organisation.
- Introduce the City District and Compost Site Administrators if applicable and explain the role of compost caring team (more in Manual for compost caring team).

Tip: Give them a platform in the introduction and express gratitude for their support of composting projects. You can thank people for coming and getting involved.

- Introduce the issue of biowaste and composting in general (more in How to compost).
- Tip:** You can mention the production of organic waste, the path of organic waste from the consumer to the end of its life cycle, what a closed food cycle is, legislative requirements, methods of processing organic waste and benefits of composting.

- Short introduction to what community composting is.
- What are the benefits for community members? Explain what everyone will gain by joining (mention less residual waste, fertiliser for their plants, part of the biowaste solution – less transport, circularity, help add organic material back into the soil).

Tip: Include a warm-up introduction of the workshop participants. The suggested activity is a short introduction and answer to the question “Why do you want to take part in Urban Community Composting?” The participant should keep it really short. A fun activity is to do the introduction while holding a lit match. When the flame is close to your finger, your introduction should be complete.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Who does what in the composting community? How can I contribute?

- Compost care team (2-3 persons – compost caring team)
 - Responsible for the compost operations, organising turning of the pile, compost harvest and other events associated with the composter

- Point of contact, moderator of the group (email/ messenger/ community chat)
- Have broader knowledge about composting, incl. troubleshooting, inducing new community members
- The community
- Everyone knows what to put in the composter and has a basic knowledge of composting process

Budget? Who finances what and what do we need money for?

- Composting site
- The placement of a community composter requires a specific legal treatment. The site might be donated, borrowed, leased or sold to the community. It depends on the requirements and conditions of the contracting parties and requires a respective budget
- Composter
- Depends on the selected solution, size and material.
- Tools and other equipment
- Shelter for tools and equipment
- Wood chips or other brown material for composting

Formal aspects on how to participate

- Whom to contact
- How to get in touch with other participants (Mailing list, chat, etc)
- Where to find particular information
- Where to pay the fee if there is one
- How to access the site if it's locked
- ...



Composting site

- Explain the construction of the compost bins (depending on the site and chosen composting system)

For example: The most common and suitable construction is two or three-chamber wooden compost bin. Each chamber has a capacity of 1 m³. The wooden structure is supplemented with wire mesh to protect against potential rodent attacks. A three-chamber composter is suitable for approximately 40-50 households, depending on the number of family members and domestic organic waste production.

Some tips and hacks for your multi-chamber composters:

- You can prop the lid against a small leg located on the inside right of the composter structure.
 - The front walls of the composter are removable to facilitate turning.
- Explain how to use the multi-chamber system (more in How to compost) and the responsibilities of members
 - The community will need to “turn the compost” approximately five times a year and “harvest the compost” about two times a year. The members will always be informed in advance when these events will take place. Every helping hand counts.
 - Explain what generally happens in the composter and briefly describe the process (more in How to compost).
 - **Decomposition phase:** high microbial activity, temperature gradually increases.
 - **Conversion phase:** slowing down of the breakdown of organic compounds, cooling of the pile, building up new structures.
 - **Maturation phase:** fungi break down the complex molecules, taking about 2 months until the compost is mature.
 - Explain the rules of composting (more in How to compost).
 - Mixing browns and greens
 - Aerating
 - Chunking
 - Correct placement
 - Moisture maintenance
 - What Belongs and Doesn't Belong in the Composter (more in How to compost, or see also poster What belongs to the urban community composter). The most important rules can be found on the sign on

the side of the composter. Only organic plant residues should be placed in the composter. Please avoid meat and dairy products. Also, remember to shred or tear all materials.

- Inquire about dried material and storage for the composting tools.
 - Maybe someone knows a carpenter, woodworker, herbivores keeper or tree climber who could provide you with dry material.
 - Maybe someone has a shed or cellar available.
- Explain why the compost bins are locked (if they are) and show how the lock works
 - Please do not share the lock code with anyone, not even your closest friends and neighbours. The reason is simple: the community has its maximum capacity, and if more people compost there, the composter will fill up quickly. This means it won't have time to mature properly, you'll have to turn it more frequently, and eventually, there won't be enough space for organic waste. Furthermore, we want your compost to be of high quality, which is why we provide training and send introductory emails. This prevents you from finding plastic bags, uncut pumpkins, or cigarette butts in your compost.
- Explain how to use the mature compost (more in the How to compost).

Tip: You can distribute the harvested compost among yourselves and use it to enrich your household plants, balcony, or garden. You can also apply the compost to the surroundings (around shrubs and trees). Or you can donate it.
- Troubleshooting:
 - Address the issue with rodents.
 - Address the issue with flies.
 - Address the issue with bad odour.
 - Address the issue with moulds.
 - Address the issue with the compost pile being too wet/ dry.
 - Address the issue with potential vandalism.

INAUGURATION OF COMPOST

Bring a small vial of worm tea (or something similar) and pour it on the composter together with the community members.

Tips for practical workshop activities

Tip 1: Play a game about what does and does not belong to the composter. Use cards with pictures of common biowaste and let the workshop participants decide whether it goes in the composter or not.

Tip 2: Show how to determine the right amount of humidity by demonstrating a fist test.

Tip 3: Build a miniature compost pile with the right materials to ensure good aeration.

Tip 4: Build a miniature version of a three-chamber composter for indoor workshops.

Follow up activities: compost turning and harvest

Describe the chambers of the composter and what is happening in each of them.

- Turn the compost:
 - Remove the upper part of the front wall of the first chamber.
 - Remove the entire front wall of the second chamber.
 - Lay a tarp under the first and second chambers.
 - Use forks or shovels to transfer the contents of the first chamber into the second.

Note: If the first two chambers are already full, you need to turn both. The second to the third and the first into the second.

- Meanwhile turning:
 - o Remove items that don't belong in the compost (spoons, lids, plastic bags...).
 - o Tear dry material (paper bags and containers).
 - o Crush eggshells.
 - o Chop large pieces into smaller ones (whole fruits...).
 - o Break flower stems and branches into shorter lengths.
- Compost harvesting event
 - Mention how long it usually takes to have a mature

compost.

- Remove the upper part of the front wall of the third chamber.
- Lay a tarp under the third chamber.
- Use forks or shovels to transfer the contents of the third chamber on the tarp.
- Use a sieve to sift the compost and separate the larger chunks.
- Distribute the compost among the community members.

Tip: We recommend considering this activity as a festive event with an accompanying entertainment program.

- Turning the compost and harvesting the compost are two separate events

If you have any questions, feel free to ask. And don't worry - if you forget to mention something during the workshop, you can always send it to the participants in a follow-up email.

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