

Attachment #5

Washington State University Extension (WSUE) Community Horticulture Program

Master Composter Recycler
Quarterly Report
October-December 2015

The end of year 2015 programming for Washington State University Extension WSUE brings many accomplishments. WSUE Staff is thrilled to have the Master Composter Recycler program up and running again. The need in our community is greater than ever. With residential recycling rates dropping and organic waste on the rise we need to empower our community to make educated choices. As always our mission is to reach community goals with action oriented programs and strong education.

Master Gardener Program (MG)

Activities: Twenty-two Master Gardeners completed the program and were certified in October. Over seventy-five Master Gardeners attended the annual MG/MCR Graduation Ceremony. Three MGs were awarded for extraordinary contributions to the program. Thirty interns have registered for the 2016 course.

This quarter, Master Gardeners volunteered at Master Composter outreach events (WWU Sustainability Festival, Toward Zero Waste at the Washington Small Fruit Conference), maintained the soil conservation demonstration at Hovander (this complements the compost demonstration area), maintained the Hovander compost demonstration area, maintained compost systems in community gardens, attended MCR compost workshops, participated in WSU Webinars for continuing education (*Watershed Study of Lake Padden, Rain Gardens, Pesticide Training, Understanding Soil Sampling, Optimal Composting*), and answered questions from the public about composting practices and sustainable gardening practices in our year round Plant Clinic.

Special projects: Resource conservation education. An interpretive presentation was prepared to accompany the Hovander Rain Barrel demonstration that was created by volunteers in July 2015. The presentation will be displayed at Hovander Homestead Park and is also available in Power Point format. The presentation covers rain barrel assembly and points to Whatcom County resources.

New Volunteers Certified in 2015: 22

Active Volunteers in this quarter: 75

Total Volunteer Hours in this quarter: 1,018.7

Notes: These numbers represent this quarter ONLY. "Active Volunteers" is tallied from volunteers actively reporting to our database. Activities includes public outreach, education, and continuing education on the topics of compost, soil, and sustainable practices.

Master Composter Recycler Program (MCR)

Activities: Fifteen Master Composter Recyclers were certified in October and attended the annual MG/MCR graduation ceremony. Two MCRs were recognized for extraordinary contributions to the program.

This quarter, MCR volunteers maintained the Hovander compost demonstration area, expanded our presence on social media, answered composting and recycling questions via Facebook, participated in 3 community garden composting workshops (Outback Farm, Faith Lutheran Community Garden, Maple Falls), volunteered at outreach events (WWU Sustainability Fair, Toward Zero Waste at the Washington Small Fruit Conference), gave worm bin presentations to youth (Fairhaven Middle School, Sterling Meadows), initiated a waste audit at a local business (Terra Organics & Natural Foods), and conducted research for future projects and website updates.

Program planning focused on expanding the course content and speaker base to include a more thorough grasp of recycling, Zero-Waste endeavors in Whatcom County, and outreach strategies. The 2016 Master composting course will further integrate into the MG training. The MG & MCR courses will occur on the same day at different times, and share select speakers, resources, and field trips. This ensures that the two groups interact at several stages and are familiar with the full range of programming and volunteer activities within the Community Horticulture Program. New MG applicants are encouraged to enroll in the MCR course, and the more accessible evening schedule of the MCR course provides a good alternative to those interested in the MG program. Six people have registered for the 2016 MCR course and 15 total are anticipated.

New Volunteers Certified in 2015: 15

Active Volunteers this quarter: 15

Total Volunteer Hours this quarter: 234

Outreach

WWU Sustainability Fair (10/13/15): WSUE hosted a table on the topic of composting & waste reduction and provided information about WSU and Whatcom County resources on these topics.

Event Volunteer Hours: 12

Public Contacts: 500

Toward Zero Waste at the Washington Small Fruit Conference (12/2-4/15): Volunteers created and distributed a pamphlet about TZW goals and the resources provided through Sustainable Connections; created, organized and staffed a zero-waste management system, which included monitoring waste bins, busing lunch areas and interacting directly with attendees; surveyed 30 attendees regarding personal composting & recycling practices; debriefed on improvements for next year and for other events. Through fastidious monitoring, volunteers ensured that ten of fourteen 68-gallon totes contained only compostable materials, diverting approximately two-thirds of the waste that would have gone to the landfill.

Event Volunteer Hours: 75

Public Contacts: 1000

Total Volunteer Hours: 87

Total Contacts: 1500

Workshops

East County Resource Center Community Garden (10/10/15): Art & Science of Community Garden Composting presentation followed by bin remediation, prepping and adding waste demonstration, and work party.

Volunteer hours: 5

Attendees: 4

Outback Farm (10/25/15): Art & Science of Community Garden Composting presentation followed by bin construction (4 total), prepping and adding waste demonstration, and work party.

Volunteer Hours: 5

Attendees: 10

Sterling Meadows After-School Club (10/28/15): Worm bin set-up and education, and follow-up support. WSUE volunteered with ReSources to assist with this workshop. A second workshop with this group is scheduled in January.

Volunteer Hours: 10

Attendees: 15

Faith Lutheran Community Garden (11/7/15): Art & Science of Community Garden Composting presentation followed by bin remediation, prepping and adding waste demonstration, and work party. Interpretative signs were installed.

Volunteer Hours: 6
Attendees: 15

Total Volunteer Hours: 26
Total Attendees: 44

Cafeteria Waste Audits

WSUE consulted with Parkview Elementary and Sunnyland Elementary about cafeteria waste audits and plate waste studies, cafeteria design, how to incorporate compost systems into the school gardens, and food waste and recycling education in the classroom. Next steps will take place in winter of 2016.

Partnerships

ReSources

WSUE volunteers assisted with a worm bin workshop for the Sterling Meadows After-School Club. WSUE collaborated with ReSources providing in-class waste reduction education.

Bellingham Food Bank Garden Project

Garden Project participants have been awarded full scholarships for the Master Composter Recycler training.

Sanitary Service Company (SSC)

WSUE is collaborating with SSC regarding the Sunnyland Elementary cafeteria design.

Toward Zero Waste

WSUE volunteers attended a Waste Audit at Terra Organica organized by a fellow MCR volunteer and Terra Organica employee. WSUE volunteers facilitated a massive TZW endeavor at the Washington Small Fruit Conference hosted annually by WSUE.

Workshop/ Outreach Summary

Volunteer Hours: 391
Workshops: 4
Workshop Attendees: 44
Outreach Events: 2
Contacts: 1300



Towards Zero Waste Team at the Lynden Small Fruit Conference



WSUE volunteers talk compost at the WWU Sustainability Fair





Sterling Meadows after-school club adds worms to their new bin.

Western Students at the Outback Farm Workshop



Composting workshop at Faith Lutheran Community Garden.