

COMPOST NOW... *INCREASE YOUR GREEN*

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: Our team decided to focus on promoting composting as a sustainability initiative. Our goal was to raise awareness amongst those who do not currently compost, and we defined a target audience—those most in need of composting education and availability—as people who reside in rental units. The objective was to bring organic waste diversion (i.e., composting) to Tompkins County tenants by involving their landlords.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS: We received assistance from Publications and Marketing at Cornell University, who provided graphic design services, and Wegmans, who donated materials (BioBags). Local residents, students at Ithaca College, students from the Sustainability Hub at Cornell University, and students in Katherine McComas' communication class at Cornell all contributed to our market research. Our community partners were: Mark Witting of Cayuga Compost and Adam Michaelides, master composter, Cornell Cooperative Extension. We also met with Leo Riley and Kat McCarthy of Tompkins County Solid Waste about future participation in the educational aspect of the project.

PROJECT OUTCOMES: On February 23, 2009, our team presented the “COMPOST NOW...*increase your green*” community action project at the Tompkins County Landlords Association monthly meeting. Stressing the educational component and highlighting our market research (which confirmed the benefits of being viewed as a landlord who provides a greener lifestyle for his/her tenants), we demonstrated how current solid waste removal fees could decrease through organic waste diversion. We also outlined a detailed and doable composting plan for landlords to offer their tenants as a way to set up organic waste removal and reduce nonrecyclable solid waste. Our community partners were in attendance to confirm facts and figures and answer questions.

As a result of our project, a well-known Tompkins County landlord started a composting program at one of his apartment complexes. At an on-site event on May 16, individual apartment-sized compost containers were distributed to each tenant and our community partners provided composting and recycling education. Media coverage of the event and the overall project included: local television (News 10 Now), radio (News Talk 870 WHCU), and print (*Tompkins Weekly*). The media coverage served to highlight the public relations benefits of composting to “*increase your green.*”