



**CENTRAL CONTRA COSTA**  
**SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY**

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CCCSWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
**FROM:** ASHLEY LOUISIANA, OFFICE ASSISTANT  
 BART CARR, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER  
**DATE:** JULY 15, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** 2009 HOME COMPOSTING FOR BUSY PEOPLE! PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

## SUMMARY

The *Home Composting for Busy People Program* has served Central Contra Costa County communities with home composting instruction and assistance since 1994. The program promotes backyard composting and other yard and food waste reduction and reuse practices. Additionally, the program assists local communities to meet state-mandated AB 939 waste reduction goals.

The following table summarizes participation in each program area for 2009:

### Program Participation

Year	Information Line	Workshops	Compost Bins	Certifications
2009	612	224	352	1245
2008	493	296	367	1615
2007	563	237	394	1611
2006	759	270	307	1512

This report describes how the *Home Composting for Busy People Program* performed in 2009 to expand small scale composting in the CCCSWA service area.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. This report is for informational purposes only. No additional action is required.

## DISCUSSION

The *Home Composting for Busy People Program* is sponsored by the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA). The program consists of five components: A telephone response line, free instructional workshops, web-based instructional video, reduced cost compost bins, and a home compost certification with accompanying garbage rate reduction. The program operates so that all components work together to provide a balanced menu of instruction, support services, and incentives that will expand the practice of home composting in the CCCSWA service area.

**Program Participation in 2009**

2,433 residents utilized program services to learn about home composting. The participation breakdown for each program component includes:

- 612 residents called the telephone information line
- 224 residents attended scheduled workshops
- 352 residents purchased a compost bin
- 1245 residents participated in the certification/rate reduction

**Information Line**

The program's information line received a total of 612 calls. Primary use came from residents requesting information on the annual recertification process, workshop reservations, and information on compost bins. A 24 hour response time from CCCSWA staff is a priority.

**Information Line Use by Community**

Year	Laf	Orinda	Mor	WC	Dan	Count y	Total
2009	94	72	56	258	71	61	612
2008	59	64	53	211	50	56	493
2007	86	64	50	254	69	40	563
2006	104	90	68	307	97	93	759

**Workshop Participation**

In 2009, 224 residents attended twenty workshops. Average participation for the workshops was 11 residents per workshop. Billi Haug and Linda Mizes hold a contract with the Authority and continue to instruct the annual workshops.

**Workshop Participation by Community**

Year	WC	Dan	Laf	Mor	Orinda	County	Subtotal	Other	Total
2009	76	28	23	12	12	16	167	57	224
2008	106	35	40	22	26	16	245	51	296
2007	91	26	36	16	17	10	196	41	237
2006	62	11	85	31	25	6	220	50	270

**Home Composting Bin Sales**

The CCCSWA-subsidized compost bin sale program continues to offer the Smith & Hawken Biostack compost bin for \$62.00 (includes tax and UPS shipping). Reduced cost sale of the Biostack continues to be an effective incentive for many residents to begin composting. The Biostack is sold either by mail order, or by credit card orders placed on the Authority website. A total of 333 Biostack bins were sold in 2009 (NOTE: Staff is currently assessing a number of different compost bins to replace the Biostack which has been discontinued; current supplies of the Biostack are estimated to last into the Autumn of 2010).

Residents can also purchase the Norseman Earth Machine compost bin for \$42.21 (includes tax) at the Walnut Creek Recycling Center. The Earth Machine is a “passive” style compost bin which means the user does not have to “turn” the compost material on a regular basis to aerate. A total of 19 Earth Machine bins were sold in 2009.

The CCCSWA partnered with NatureMill in 2009 to provide an online coupon code for service area residents to purchase the NatureMill Indoor Compost Machine at 30% off. While this indoor compost machine can be used by a home owner, this partnership was geared towards residents in apartments, townhomes or condos who do not have yard space for a backyard compost bin. The NatureMill is for food scraps only and can be purchased online at [www.naturemill.com](http://www.naturemill.com). Unfortunately, 2009 data from NatureMill is not available, but NatureMill has been tracking purchases starting 1/1/2010, and a total of 17 Indoor Compost Machines have been purchased by CCCSWA service area residents.

**Biostack Sales by Community**

Year	WC	Dan	Laf	Mor	Orinda	County	Total
2009	113	58	53	24	25	60	333
2008	129	66	50	19	28	75	367
2007	135	64	56	21	48	60	384
2006	108	33	53	21	35	40	290

**Earth Machine Sales by Community**

Year	WC	Dan	Laf	Mor	Orinda	County	Sub Total	Other	Total
2009	11	4	2	1	0	0	18	1	19
2008	4	2	1	0	1	1	9	0	9
2007	4	0	2	0	0	3	9	1	10
2006	3	1	2	1	1	0	8	9	17

**Home Compost Certification**

The composting certification is available to all service area residents who compost at home to divert household waste. The program certifies residents who actively compost, rewarding them with a \$1.50 per month refuse rate reduction. Recertification is required annually to confirm that the resident is still composting and their estimated diversion amounts are updated. Recertification can be accomplished by mail, calling the information line, or via the CCCSWA’s website. In 2009, 1,245 residents were certified and received the \$1.50 per month rate reduction.

**Certifications by Community**

Year	Orinda	Lafayette	Moraga	Danville	WC	County	Total
2009	176	234	104	177	484	70	1245
2008	178	294	130	217	713	83	1615
2007	272	283	146	233	587	90	1611
2006	208	280	134	225	569	96	1512

**Promotion**

The *Home Composting for Busy People Program* relies on a number of different methods to promote its services. Free and lower cost advertising is used within each community to help control costs. Free advertising includes articles and announcements in newsletters, including the CCCSWA's *Diversions*, Walnut Creek's *Nutshell*, and Lafayette's *Vista* newsletter. Free announcements are also placed in newspapers, including the Contra Costa Sun, Walnut Creek Journal, and the Contra Costa Times. Display advertising is placed in the Contra Costa Sun, Walnut Creek Journal, and Contra Costa Times, normally in the Home & Garden Section.

In addition to these publications, all of the program's services are on the CCCSWA's website, including general information on composting, other green waste reduction methods, annual workshop schedule and registration, Biostack bin purchase, and home compost certification application and annual recertification. Website visitors can also view portions of the "Home Composting – It's Second Nature" video, visit the home composting how-to guide and frequently asked questions.

Promotional brochures (attached) are available at all community events the CCCSWA attends. Residents can request that these brochures be mailed to their home by phone or through the Authority website. All brochures are also available at the monthly composting workshops, and brochures are posted at all workshop locations throughout the year.

**Estimate of Green Waste Diversion**

An estimate of green waste potentially diverted by home composting can be developed by multiplying the 1,615 certified residents for 2008 by an estimated weight of yard waste diverted by active composters. An estimated weight for diverted yard waste can be derived by applying the averaged diversion percentage for certified residents. This averaged diversion, 60% of the 64 gallon green waste cart, equates to 38 gallons. Converting this to "pounds", a weight to volume conversion factor of 1.83 lbs/gallon is used to provide an average weekly reduction of approximately 69 pounds per composting household. Assuming that residents are actively composting at least 6 months, or 26 weeks, a potential diversion of 1,794 pounds per resident is possible.<sup>1</sup>

**By applying this estimate to the 1,245 certified residents in 2009, about 1,117 tons of green waste was potentially diverted.** Although this is only an estimate, it represents the potential effect that home composting can have in reducing waste.

**Estimate of Potential Diversion**

Year	Certified Composters	Diverted Weight (Tons)
2009	1245	1,117
2008	1615	1,449
2007	1611	1,445
2006	1512	1,356
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5,367 Tons</b>

<sup>1</sup> Conversion for one cubic yard of mixed green waste (non-compacted leaves, grass, and misc. "other") - 370 lbs/cy as determined from Appendix A: U.S. EPA Assessment of Yard Waste Composting Programs. Conversion for cubic yard to gallon - 201.97 gallons (US)/cy (7.48 gallons/cf x 27 cf/cy). 370 lbs/cy divided by 173.56 gal/cy=1.83lbs./gallon

**Annual Program Costs**

The total annual cost for the *Home Composting for Busy People Program* in 2009 was \$73,448.08. Costs include consultant services, workshop instruction, school instruction, compost bin purchase, instructional aids such as handouts and DVD video, and program administrative costs. Program costs also include the \$6.00 per Biostack compost bin CCCSWA-subsidy. This subsidy pays for bin storage, shipping, sales tax, and a portion of the bin cost. The Earth Machine and NatureMill compost bin sales are not subsidized so cost figures related to their sale is not shown.

**2009 Costs by Month**

Category	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Apr-09	May-09	Jun-09
Labor	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00
Program	\$23,153.73	\$1,450.01	\$2,367.21	\$15,286.49	\$3,727.83	(\$6,541.84)
Sub-total	\$24,453.73	\$2,750.01	\$3,667.21	\$16,586.49	\$5,027.83	(\$5,241.84)

Category	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	TOTAL
Labor	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00	<b>\$15,600.00</b>
Program	(\$1,548.44)	\$1,246.82	\$1,081.93	\$3,029.41	\$1,004.20	\$13,590.73	<b>\$57,848.08</b>
Sub-total	(\$248.44)	\$2,546.82	\$2,381.93	\$4,329.41	\$2,304.20	\$14,890.73	<b>\$73,448.08</b>

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Annual Workshop Promotional Flier (with 2009 Workshop Schedule)
- B. Compost Bin Promotional Flier
- C. Workshop Handouts