



Upper Valley Super Compost Project

The Upper Valley Super Compost Project is institutionalizing living compost systems into 24 participating school outdoor classrooms.

The goal is to increase real-world problem-solving opportunities, enhance the health of schoolyards, school and community gardens, and save schools money!

SUPPORT THE SUPER COMPOST PROJECT!

LET'S CLOSE THE NUTRIENT LOOP EVERYWHERE!

FAQ's - Frequently asked questions and identified barriers in successfully maintaining compost systems at school	Solutions to identified barriers and gaps addressed by the Upper Valley Super Compost Project (UVSCP) are:
Capacity for staff leadership	Each participating school will provide a stipend for a lead staff member, derived from the cost-savings of no longer hiring a food scraps hauler. UVSCP suggests \$1000/year (Most schools currently spend 1500 – 2000/year on hauler removal fees).
Buy-in from facilities maintenance and food service	Facilities maintenance and food service staff involvement is required in all UVSCP planning, systems, and installation from the start.
Lacking technical expertise	Each school gets 50 hours from an assigned technical service provider (TSP) over the course of 2 years to develop recipe, address troubleshooting, and to design human systems to support the compost program. TSP starts when the system is in place.
School staff turnover	Regeneration Corps is on deck to continue to deliver hands-on on-going support to schools through the TSP phase and after the project timeline is complete, including TSP and curriculum integration.
Community involvement is challenging to sustain	We're talking with the UVM Master Compost program about partnering on curriculum needs, training needs, and ongoing School/project leader collaborations to provide project service sites for EMG Master Compost interns. The UVSCP TSP team will work to develop a community of practice of volunteers, experts, and feedstock providers, among schools and surrounding communities.
Schools feel isolated and disconnected from each other	The UVSCP will have a website that all participating schools (and the public) will be able to access to share stories, success, challenges, and to continue connectivity and learning. The SCP TSP team will work to develop a community of practice among participating schools and connecting communities.

Teachers feel challenged to make strong connections between composting, classrooms, and curricula	Compost systems are designed as outdoor classrooms with cross-cutting STEAM concepts. Digital compost data collection forms will be provided to allow for student data collection to support science and math inquiry. Integration focuses on making connections for students, allowing them to engage in relevant, meaningful activities that can be connected to real life. The SCP team is poised to help teachers bridge the gap.
Start-up costs	The UVSCP will provide all start-up costs for siting, permitting, and building compost facilities, training site operators, plus 50 hours of technical assistance.
Ongoing costs	Schools should budget for and will be able to afford minimal upgrades and tool replacements as a part of their ongoing cost-savings from hauler fees. Compost bins usually last for 7 – 10 years before needing any maintenance. Costs of less than \$300/year are anticipated for replacement hemlock boards, thermometers, and buckets.
Composting requires regular maintenance to include turning the compost regularly. Who will be responsible for this, especially during the summer when students and staff are not in the building?	Our design is large enough to manage at least 90 days of food waste between turns. Students can turn compost quarterly, or the school can become a EMG Master Compost Service Project site to be turned quarterly by community volunteers and EMG Master Compost interns. The system does not require any summer maintenance unless food scraps are being added regularly. Ideally, bins are opened and airing out all summer long.
Location - where do we locate it so that it is not on town land, does not interfere with other student activities and does not create a health concern?	The very first step for the UVSCP is a site visit with your facilities maintenance and administration to determine a site that does not interfere with seasonal schoolyard needs. As far as the health concern, there is none! When composting is done properly it's hygienic. The official PFRP (Process to Further Reduce Pathogens) temperature is 131 degrees for 3 days. UVSCP compost systems regularly reach 140 degrees.
Do we produce enough material for composting?	If you create even 1 bucket of food waste a week it's enough to have a compost system on site. Statistics tell us that Elementary schools produce about a pound of waste per student, per day. That's a lot!
Bear issues – Dumpsters are already a problem. A compost will create a second attraction for bears (and other wildlife)	Well-made compost does not stink. Rotting piles of food and trash bins do! Our TSP will help to develop a recipe for your compost system using locally sourced waste materials from your community. When the recipe is correct and the temperatures hot, there is no smell to attract wildlife.
Rodents - compost attracts rats.	Again, well-made compost does not stink, and so will not attract rats. The UVSCP compost systems regularly reach temperatures of 140 degrees – too hot for rodents! In addition to developing a recipe, our TSP will help the school develop schoolyard hygiene to remove any habitat that could be attractive to rodents.