

# Composting project



Above: a composter installed to collect garden waste from Hobby's Garden (see Rain Tank Project for more on this)

Add a composter at your school!!! While many schools have started recycling initiatives, composting projects are much more uncommon. Schools can compost a plethora of items in great quantity, including wet paper towels (bathrooms) and fruit and vegetable peels. This compost can be used in a community garden or for any gardening needs. This is much better than using store-bought fertilizer that can contribute to excess nutrient concentrations (nitrates and phosphates) in nearby bodies of water, which lead to eutrophication and an unhealthy ecosystem. An easy composter to install is a Can O' Worms, an "odorless, user-friendly **worm composting** system that allows anyone to participate in recycling and garden enrichment through **composting**."

Another composting related project you can do at your school is to set up a **Food Diversion Station**. A food diversion station is a station often located around the cafeteria or eating area where students can dispose of unwanted food scraps in an eco-friendly manner. A resource guide on establishing a food diversion program by the Green Team successfully summarizes the goals of this type of project:

Diverting food waste from the waste stream increases the life of existing landfills; prevents greenhouse gases like methane from being generated when food waste breaks down in landfills ... and when food waste is processed through composting, the finished product (compost) is a valuable soil amendment for farmers and gardeners that can replace the need for chemical fertilizers. Participation in food waste diversion programs increases your students' environmental awareness, and empowers students by engaging in an environmental behavior that creates sustainable change in their community. Food waste diversion programs can also save your school money on disposal costs.

Methane is even more potent than other greenhouse gases (traps heat more effectively than CO<sub>2</sub>, so this is especially relevant).

Purchase of composting system:

FREE compost bins may be obtained through the MassDEP GREEN TEAM program

[https://thegreenteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Food\\_Waste\\_Diversion\\_Guide\\_for\\_Schools\\_\(1\).pdf](https://thegreenteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Food_Waste_Diversion_Guide_for_Schools_(1).pdf)



### Field Trip Destinations:

- Griffith Park Composting Facility
  - Check out LA City San's website for more information
  - It is designed to compost the organic matter produced in the regional park. Maintenance crews collect dropped leaves, lawn clippings, and trimmings from

acres of landscaping. Zoo doo (collected from herbivores such as elephants and zebras) and biosolids are blended with chipped park greenery and composted. TOPGRO™ the final compost product, is then used in Griffith Park, thus completing the full cycle of recycling.

- Sanitary Landfills
  - Calabasas Landfill (818) 889-0363
    - Living near a landfill is not pleasant... Reducing, Reusing and Recycling is better than throwing it in the trash!!
    - <https://www.theacorn.com/articles/calabasas-landfill-causes-a-stink/>
  - Scholl Canyon Landfill (818) 243-9779
    - Natural Gas production landfill
    - The Scholl Canyon Golf and Tennis Club was built in 1993, by the American Golf Corp. based in Santa Monica. Constructed on top of the northwest part of the landfill in the San Rafael Hills. The newer layout replaced a golf facility that was **closed in 1989 after dangerous levels of methane were released from under the golf course.**



**Resources for Students, by Students**

Created by Renata Robins (18 years, Palisades Charter High School)