

FEBRUARY
2002

COMPOSTING CHRONICLE

News from the Georgia Composting Association

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Composting
Association
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Georgia Composting Association Membership Meeting

By Julia Gaskin
University of Georgia

The Georgia Composting Association held its fall membership meeting on October 19 at the Chateau Elan. There was a summary of the groups accomplishments for the year including:

- Sponsorship of the BioCycle Conference, The Soil Water Connection in Atlanta,
- Development of demonstration plots using compost for erosion control,
- Sponsorship of the Compost Open House informational meeting at the University of Georgia's Bioconversion Center, and
- Participation in the Roundtable for identifying barriers to composting.

We heard from Jim Spotts about the benefits of using organics on construction sites. This theme tied in well with an effort that GCA has promoted all year - that restoring the organic matter in the soil can help



"A theme that GCA has promoted all year - restoring the organic matter in our soil can help protect water quality and compost has a key role to play."

protect water quality and compost has a key role to play. There was also a briefings from P2AD and UGA on several projects involving composting that would be taking place over the next year. Finally, Phil Haney presented a summary of new directions and markets that composters should consider.

The various committees met and outlined goals for the coming year. A new committee focusing on compost use in horticulture and agriculture was also formed.

New officers were elected by the board before the general meeting. Maxcy Nolan is the new president; David Bloyer is

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Special Thanks

Special thanks to Jimmy Freeman at Kenworth of Atlanta who allowed GCA to use their site for the erosion demonstration. We would also like to thank Scott Stokes at City of Smyrna who sent equipment and operators free of charge to set up the demonstration project. The erosion demonstration was

seen by a number of people from all over the country as part of the Biocycle conference. We deeply appreciate the help in making the project successful. Also, thanks to Jim Spotts for his presentation at the Membership Meeting.

Compost Challenges

Letter from the President

By Maxcy Nolan, President



Upcoming Events

Compost Facility Operator Training.

May 1-3, 2002 at the UGA Bioconversion Center. Call Ms. Cathy Felton (706) 542-3086 for more information.

SE Recycling Conference.

February 17-20, 2002 in Orange Beach, AL. Call Gloria Hardegree, Georgia Recycling Coalition at (404) 634-3095 for more information.

GreenPrints Conference.

February 20-23, 2002 in Atlanta, GA. Call (404) 872-3549 ex. 114 for more information.

I look forward to serving as the new President of the Georgia Composting Association (GCA), and want to express my sincere thanks to Past-President Wayne King. He and the other GCA Board members had a superlative year in 2001. The new Board will have to work extremely hard in 2002 to maintain their momentum.

The newly elected Board met in Macon in December and we had a very productive meeting. The following includes important items for emphasis during 2002.

- GCA needs energetic committees. Any member who wants to serve on a committee should know that they are sorely needed. Just contact a board member or the chairman of the committee you want to serve on. Energetic committees are the life blood of any effective organization.
- GCA needs more members. Let's get the word out about our organization and begin recruiting new members. Then, let's make sure we keep them by having a productive,

informed and vibrant organization.

- GCA needs to help develop markets for our products.
- GCA needs to do all we can to help establish standards that will ensure the consistent quality of our products.
- GCA needs to make sure that the scientific data needed by our customers about the expected performance of our products is generated and available.
- GCA needs to conduct field demonstrations so our customers, the media, government officials and others can see first hand what they can expect if they use our products.
- GCA needs to have an open ear and a watchful eye so we can respond to requests and needs of our membership, our clients as well as our potential clients.

I propose the marching orders for all GCA members during 2002 to be, (to quote a great American Hero of September 11, 2001) "LET'S ROLL!"

Georgia's Composting Infrastructure

By Britt Faucette and Julia Gaskin
University of Georgia

In an effort to be more proactive in achieving the state's 25% waste reduction goal, Georgia is in the midst of quantifying its total organic materials waste stream. Compost operations play a major role in helping to divert organics from landfills. A recent study by the University of Georgia's Engineering Outreach Program suggests Georgia's composters currently handle 800,359 tons/yr of organic materials that is either diverted from landfills or taken from animal feeding operations.

Georgia has 23 private compost operations, 11 operations run by either county or city municipalities, and 12 run by state institutions; including 8 prisons, 3 schools and one university. The private operations handle 80% of the total composted material totaling 645,000 tons annually. The municipalities

handle 18% at 144,000 tons per year. The state institutions handle the remaining 1.5% with the prisons composting 7,000 tons, the university composting 4,700 tons and the schools handling 65 tons on an annual basis.

Private operations handle a wide variety of feedstocks while the municipalities handle mostly yard waste (limbs, leaves, grass clippings) and to a lesser degree biosolids. All 12 state institutions, except the university, compost food waste.

Not all composts are created equal and not all composts will be utilized in the same manner. Prices range from \$50 per cubic yard from a private operation to free from most municipal operations. Some operations cannot produce enough for demand while others cannot give it away. Many private

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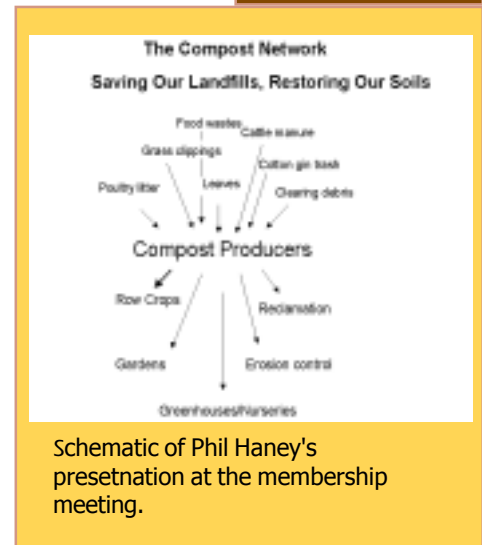
Soil Water Connection

By Julia Gaskin
University of Georgia

We talked in the last issue about the Soil-Water Connection theme for GCA during the past year, so perhaps a little background is in order. Why is this so important for Georgia? There are a number of reasons. Most of Georgia has been cultivated for over 200 years. During the period when cotton was king, even much of the Piedmont land that is now forested was farmed. Our soils took a terrible beating during that time and erosion was severe. What we now think of as Georgia red clay, was once under a brown sandy loam topsoil. That topsoil is now in our creek bottoms due to erosion.

We also have a hot, humid climate (though you couldn't tell it was humid from the past couple of years!). Our climate promotes the break down of soil organic matter that is critical for holding water and nutrients where plants can use them. Soil organic matter also helps create and hold together soil particles so the rain can move into the soil rather than running off the surface.

Our use of the land has depleted soil organic matter. This accelerates erosion and runoff, which contributes to the water quality problems of sediment, excessive nutrients and bacterial contamination. In addition, water that runs off is quickly lost and cannot be used by plants or recharge groundwater. If we can begin to rebuild our soil organic matter, then we can help clean up and conserve our water. Compost is a critical way to help add organic matter to the soil. It is really a win-win situation. We remove organics from the landfill and space landfill space, help rebuild the soil's fertility and ability to accept and hold water, AND help improve our water quality.



Schematic of Phil Haney's presentation at the membership meeting.

Georgia Composting Association Meeting, from page 1

secretary; and Cynthia Poselzeny is treasurer. The group thanked Wayne King for all his work over the past years. He was instrumental in beginning the organization and has put a lot of energy into building it up to the strong organization it is today. A special presentation was made to our treasurer, Cynthia Poselzeny, for her hard work. She was instrumental in finding a site for the demonstration projects, organized the membership meeting and generally has done many of the day to day things needed to keep

the organization going. Energetic and committed people like these are what keeps an organization productive.



Wayne King, Sr., GCA's past-president.



Cynthia Poselzeny receiving the special President's Award for her outstanding service to GCA.

Georgia's Composting Infrastructure, from page 2

operators have found niches with landscapers, organic farmers, golf courses, turf growers, homeowners, bagging for retail outlets, and more recently for erosion and sediment control.

A lack of market development is one of the main barriers to expanding the state's compost industry. Increasing the compost infrastructure can divert more material from landfills and move more manure and litters off large animal feeding operations. Developing an expansive market infrastructure through continual research, demonstration projects,

product and application specifications, and supporting product certification are the cornerstones to a successful and sustainable composting and organics recycling industry in Georgia. The GCA, University of Georgia, Pollution Prevention Assistance Division and Department of Community Affairs and others have all been working on various aspects of developing market infrastructure. These groups recognize without the composting industry Georgia may never achieve its waste reduction goal set in 1996.

A Closer Look at Our Members

Our new president has reminded us that an effective organization needs people who are willing to pitch and help promote GCA's mission. Some of our goals are developing standards and specifications for particular products and uses, working on promoting the use of

compost (markets), and developing demonstration projects on compost use (grants). To that end, we wanted to make sure you knew who the GCA Committee Chairs were. If you can help, please contact them.

GCA Committee Chairs

Membership

David Bloyer, Athens-Clarke County Water Pollution Control
706 613-3764 bod5@negia.net

Permitting

Jerald Sargent, Sargent Nutrients, Inc.
770 983-7300

Markets

Wayne King, Sr., Erth Products
770 486-8150 waynesr@erthproducts.com

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Britt Faucette, Engineering Outreach University of Georgia
706 542-4768 faucette@engr.uga.edu

Standards

Peter Germishuizen, GroMor Organics
229 382-4454 pfgerm@surfsouth.com

Grants

Phil Haney, Georgia Dept. Ag
404 651-9486 phaney@agr.state.ga.us

Research/Extension

Darbie Granberry, University of Georgia, Horticulture Department
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The *Composting
Chronicle* is a
publication of the
Georgia
Composting
Association

Composting Chronicle
February 2002