

# Countywide Community Compost Education Program Report 2019-2020



## July 2019-June 2020 Annual Report

Prepared by Jennifer Roberts, Program Manager, Community Compost Education  
& Mimi Enright, Program Manager,  
UC Cooperative Extension Sonoma County

## Countywide Community Compost Education Program

Annual Report, July 2019-June 2020

This is a report of activities associated with the Zero Waste Sonoma (ZWS), formerly known as Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, funding of the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County (UCMGSC) Countywide Compost Education Program from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

### Results Summary



Via all of UCMGSC's program outreach in fiscal year 2019-20, a total of 10,000 people were reached through over 300 events, community gatherings, workshops, farmers' markets, library series talks and the resource desk. Many thousands more were reached via our website and Facebook page which provide educational information on home composting and pesticide use reduction strategies as well as many other topics. One thousand seven hundred twenty three school children were also reached in school/event vermicomposting presentations.

### Program Goals and Contracted Tasks

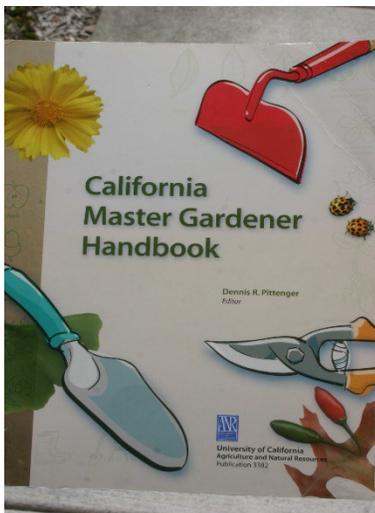
To reduce organic landfill inputs by teaching home composting through volunteer Master Gardeners (MG) at public events, schools, community gatherings, resource desks, and workshops, UCMGSC provides for composting education in each major city of Sonoma County with targeted education at major events and fairs as well as farmers' markets and libraries. The UCMGSC program utilizes composting & vermicomposting brochures in English and Spanish, to share with the public in educational outreach. UCMGSC informs Sonoma County residents of the benefits, materials, and effort involved in composting and vermicomposting at home via the following methods:

- Hold five composting workshops in English in each of the five geographic regions of the county (north, south, west, east, and central) and two Spanish language hands-on composting workshops (with the assistance of a Soluna Outreach Solutions Spanish speaking translator and presenter) in Santa Rosa and the Boyes Hot Springs area.
- Provide home composting information via direct contact with 5,000 county residents at selected major public events, including, but not limited to, the Sonoma County Fair, for a minimum of 25 event days per fiscal year.
- Create an educational demonstration garden including a compost bin at the Sonoma County Fair.
- Provide home composting and vermicomposting information and brochures via direct contact with county residents at farmers' markets and UCMGSC Library Series presentations at Sonoma County Libraries for a minimum of 200 Farmers' Market and Library Series days.
- Conduct 10 school classroom presentations per fiscal year, providing each class with worm composting materials for students and teachers to practice school waste diversion and to effect behavioral change in students at school and at home.
- Provide a resource desk and phone line to answer composting questions at the UCCE Sonoma office.

- Determine the effectiveness of UCMGSC outreach efforts (landfill tonnage reduction) through surveys sent each fiscal year to at least two hundred people who have received educational information.

In order to maximize outreach to the Spanish speaking population in Sonoma County, as part of the agreement ZWS has been paying for the services of Soluna Outreach Solutions for publicity to increase Spanish language outreach via Spanish language radio stations and other media as well as for translation services of print materials and at the Spanish language workshops. This years workshops were promoted on numerous Spanish radio shows, A PSA was created to air on two stations. El Superior and Impulso Newspapers advertised the workshop in their electronic issues. The Spanish workshops are conducted by Soluna Outreach Solutions Principal, Hugo Mata.

## Background



Since 1993, the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) has provided compost education for county residents with funding from the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA). In the last twenty years, the program has made over 750,000 contacts with composting brochures, bin distribution programs, educational booths at large public events, library talks, farmers' market information tables, workshops, and by providing a resource desk for call-in/drop-in questions in Santa Rosa. Each year large numbers of people have been reached by concentrating efforts at educational booths at well-attended public events.

From 1994-2002, surveys were conducted to document home composting by trained workshop and educational event participants, which provided the benchmark for tonnage diversion up until 2002.

According to those surveys we estimated that almost 70% of workshop contacts began or increased composting and reduced their input into the waste stream by 19.5 gallons per household per month.

In 2003-04, a short post card survey was sent to people who received information about home composting from the Master Gardener Program. This survey was designed to gather information about

the effectiveness of information disseminated on home composting from mini-demos and event booths. From survey responses we estimated that about one-quarter (23.2%) of those, who had received information on composting, started or increased their composting. Those respondents indicated that on average they were composting almost 1 gallon (0.92 gallons) of kitchen waste and almost 4 gallons (3.68 gallons) of yard waste per month. Additionally, almost one-third



(29.7%) of the survey respondents indicated that on average they were diverting 13.8 gallons per month of organic materials into the curbside pick-up containers. Similar results were obtained from surveys conducted in 2007 and 2010 in which twenty percent (20%) of the people receiving compost information from the Master Gardener Program started or increased composting. They also indicated that they were composting about 18 gallons of kitchen scraps and yard waste per month.

The 2013 survey showed that 64% of respondents had started or increased composting and that they were composting an average of 4.4 gallons of kitchen scraps and 42 gallons of yard waste per month. That is a large increase from previous surveys in past years. In 2016, the survey showed that 54% of respondents had started or increased composting and that they were composting an average of 5.6 gallons of kitchen scraps and 22 gallons of yard waste per month. Current diversion estimates are based on the 2016 survey, the results of which indicate that the educational efforts by the Sonoma County UCCE Master Gardeners are very effective and have led to a significant reduction in landfill inputs.

The Compost Education Program is operated primarily by volunteers. The budget reflects maintenance of current educational efforts. There are four unique aspects to this project:

1. Master Gardener (MG) volunteers are under the direction of the University of California Cooperative Extension and connected to UC-based research expertise.
1. Non-biased documentation of the results of educational efforts is conducted periodically in order to re-evaluate and update methodologies of the program. Landfill diversion estimates are based on statistically valid indicators of behavioral change collected from survey data.
2. Master Gardeners have a broad-based network of community projects and a reputation for providing practical science based information.
3. The volunteer nature of the program provides multiple in-person contacts for homeowners at a substantially lower cost than private contracting.



## Objectives Achieved in 2019-20



## Community Compost Workshop Series

This program of conducting seven workshops per fiscal year was created in reaction to the closure of Sonoma Compost in 2015. The program ran as a pilot partnership between UCSCMG, and at the time, the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (now Zero Waste Sonoma) in 2016. After a successful pilot year program, The UCMGSC was awarded the contract to continue waste reduction education in 2017. This current contract runs August 2017- June 2020.

The primary objectives of the programs are:

- (1) to teach home gardeners about back yard composting and vermicomposting in order to ultimately reduce landfill inputs of kitchen scraps and yard waste which create climate change emissions;
- (2) to keep resources of kitchen scraps and yard waste on home gardener's sites to reduce the amount of truck trips to Transfer Stations and ultimately Composting Facilities that are currently located outside of our County;
- (3) to teach composting skills that create compost, a rich garden and soil input.

In person workshops are free, two hours long, and cover the basics of why composting is important. They also compare and contrast the two most popular systems, using a backyard pile or bin and using a worm bin (vermicomposting). Both systems are explored in detail and participants are left with an idea of which works best for them and how to get started right away.

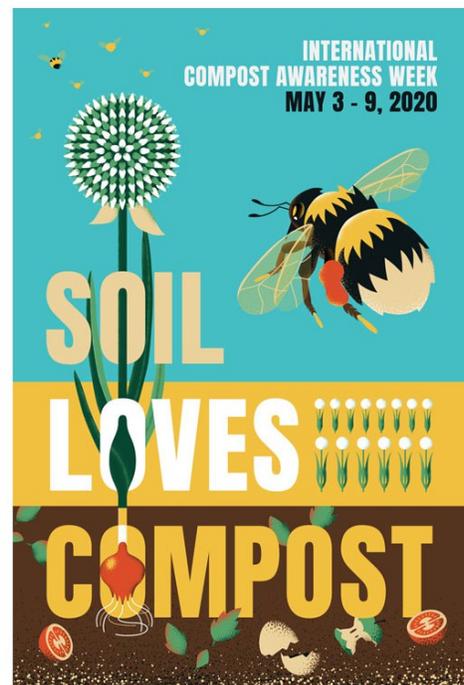
The table below shows scheduled workshops and completed workshops (listed by location alphabetically); Three workshops were held in three of the geographic areas of Sonoma County, north, central, and east. Four others were scheduled and had to be cancelled do to COVID 19 restrictions and Shelter In Place (SIP).

Before COVID 19 (SIP) workshops in English were held in Santa Rosa, and Sonoma, a workshop in Spanish was held in Healdsburg. Table 1 below lists the workshops by city so you can see the geographic coverage in this timeframe.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions we decided to move our workshops to a virtual format. This was a first for our organization. We used the Zoom platform and created a slide presentation with many visuals to deliver the same information as is done in the in person workshops.

We decided to split the workshops into two parts, one titled Intro to Composting: Starting a Hot Pile and Intro to Composting with Worms. Each workshop was one hour long, plus time for live questions. This time frame allowed the information to be digested better as it can be harder to keep focused on a slide presentation for two hours. This also allowed participants to sign up for just one section if they weren't interested in both topics.

We coincided the launch of our virtual workshops with International Compost Awareness Week, May 3-9th, 2020. This year's theme was Soil Loves Compost. After being in Shelter in Place just shy of a month, people were really excited to start gardening for the first time or to continue more than ever.



We had unprecedented pre-registration numbers for the initial English workshops. Approximately 175 people signed up for the Intro to Composting and 230 people sign up for Composting with Worms workshops. We had 20 people sign up for the Spanish Workshops.

Participants were told they had the option to attend the live version or to watch a recorded version later. Workshops were recorded and uploaded to our YouTube page. All four versions of the workshops are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLghaUabljrH2XE1kHU4Z0SzsfnLgl8XhX>

Links to these recorded workshops are found on the Composting page of our Website. They are also on the Home Composting page of Zero Waste Sonoma.

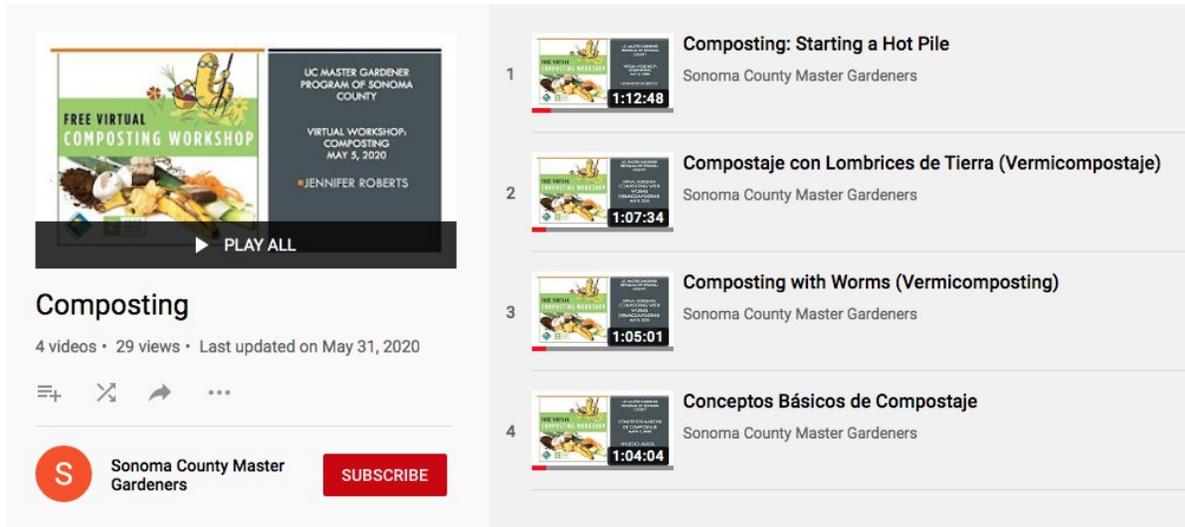
As of this writing each video on YouTube has had additional views.

Intro to Compost in English: 214

Worms in English: 66

Intro to Compost in Spanish: 19

Worms in Spanish: 17

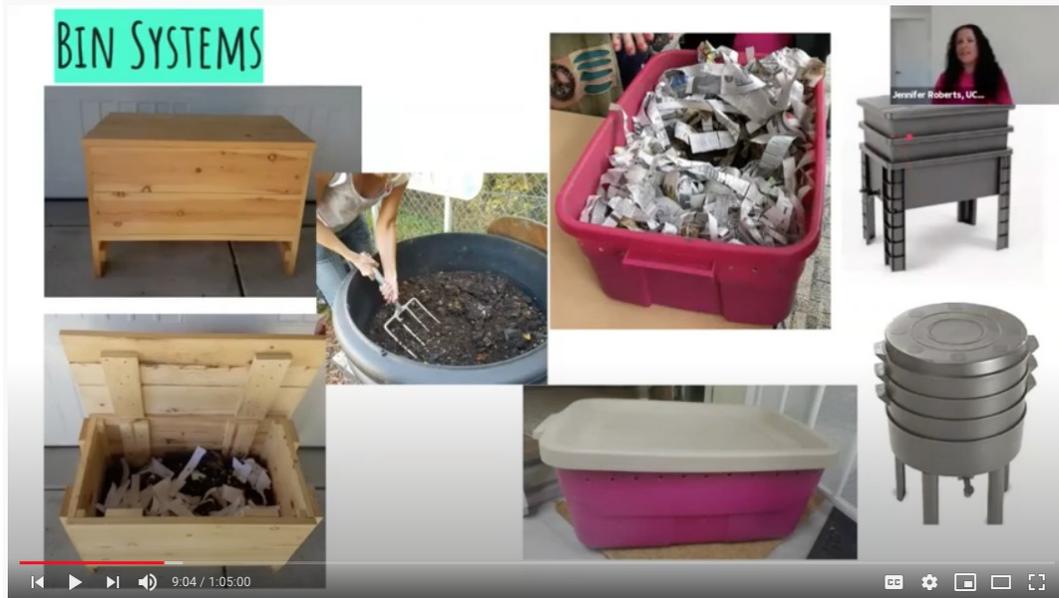


Screen Shot of the Workshop Videos on the Master Gardener YouTube.

Table 1. Master Gardeners Composting Workshops July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020

| CITY                     | LOCATION                    | DATE                 | LANGUAGE | # CONTACTS |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------|------------|
| Sonoma                   | Sonoma Garden Park          | 09/28/19             | English  | 7          |
| Santa Rosa               | Santa Rosa Water Department | 10/21/19             | English  | 21         |
| Healdsburg               | Healdsburg Labor Center     | 03/07/20             | Spanish  | 21         |
| Santa Rosa               | Bayer Farm                  | 3/21/20<br>CANCELLED | Spanish  | 0          |
| Cloverdale               | Cloverdale Community Garden | 3/28/20<br>CANCELLED | English  | 0          |
| Sebastopol               | Permaculture Skills Center  | 5/2/20<br>CANCELLED  | English  | 0          |
| Petaluma                 | Petaluma Bounty Farm        | 5/9/20<br>CANCELLED  | English  | 0          |
| Virtual Workshop Regular | Zoom                        | 05/05/20             | English  | 97 Live    |
| Virtual Workshop Regular | Zoom                        | 05/07/20             | Spanish  | 19 Live    |
| Virtual Workshop Worms   | Zoom                        | 05/08/20             | English  | 75 Live    |

|                          |      |          |         |         |
|--------------------------|------|----------|---------|---------|
| Virtual Workshop Worms   | Zoom | 05/09/20 | Spanish | 9 Live  |
| Virtual Workshop Regular | Zoom | 06/16/20 | English | 14 Live |
| Virtual Workshop Worms   | Zoom | 06/17/20 | English | 9 Live  |



Screen Shot from Virtual Composting with Worms Presentation in English.

Total live participation at all workshops during this timeframe was 272. This makes for an average of 30 people per workshop. This is double our average from last fiscal year.



Screen Shot from Virtual Spanish Composting Workshop.

Printed brochures and Recycle Guides were available and highlighted at all in person workshops. A follow up email with the links to the recorded workshops and links to the virtual versions of the brochures was also sent to all virtual participants.

After each workshop both English and Spanish speaking participants were sent a survey that asks about their composting behavior before and after their participation in the workshop. A break down of the survey results is found later in this report.

## Events, Community Gatherings, and Workshops



From July 2019 to February 2020 (No public events after February due to COVID 19) the Master Gardeners had booths at numerous large public events, community gatherings, and workshops in the county and provided information to people at these events. They distributed thousands of brochures and demonstrated home composting with display compost bins and worm boxes. We have excellent geographic coverage at events all around Sonoma County.

At one of our premier events each year, the demonstration garden at the Sonoma County Fair, we displayed a home compost bin and provided home composting brochures to many contacts. Large audiences were attracted to the garden which demonstrated sustainable landscaping practices, and many attendees received information on composting as in past years.

## Other Educational Events

The Master Gardeners presented information on composting at over 300 small-scale events throughout the year. They distributed brochures, made short presentations on home composting and worm composting, and answered questions for people (at farmers' markets, demonstration gardens, garden clubs, and our Garden Sense program home visits and via our Library series).

The farmers' markets have information tables where Master Gardeners provide guidance on plant culture, pest control and composting.



The Library Series events focus on a specific gardening topic and include information and handouts on home composting and pesticide use reduction. Library Series Talks are on many topics that relate to general ideas of waste reduction including Right Plant, Right Place, Water Wise solutions and composting. Some of the library series talks specifically focus on composting or worm composting. Titles include the Wonderful World of Worms and The Single Best Thing You Can Do For Your Garden: Compost.

From July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, in partnership with the Zero Waste Sonoma via our Community Compost Education series, we hosted a series of 9 composting workshops as discussed previously.

We did an additional one hour compost presentation for the Cloverdale Garden Club with 45 participants.

We also had a table the Youth Climate Change Rally held in Santa Rosa. We spoke with 136 people about composting and the benefits for building soil and fighting climate change. There was a worm bin, compost examples, brochures and Recycling Guides. We advertised for our upcoming in-person workshop with 100 fliers and all were taken.

Our Garden Sense program, launched in September 2013, is a partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency. Garden Sense volunteer consultants meet with Sonoma County residents in their gardens to discuss sustainable landscape practices, advise how to increase irrigation efficiency, reduce or remove lawns, soil health and create climate-appropriate gardens based on the client's functional needs.

### **School Presentations**

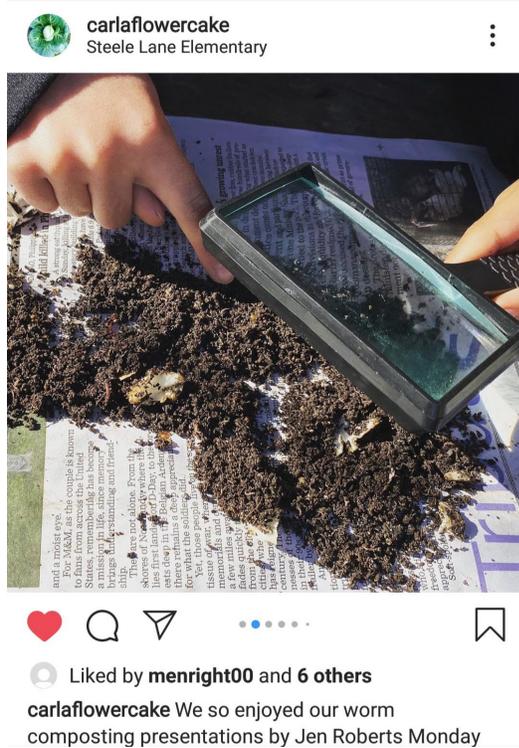
During July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 Master Gardeners made 23 school presentations at 4 different Sonoma County schools. This is 19 more presentations than last fiscal year. See Chart Below with full listing.

Presentation are done in small groups from classrooms with an average of 25 - 30 students (K-12). The demonstrations were for the length of a normal class period. These are done in the classroom, or in a school garden and there is always a hands on component. They were done to develop an environmental awareness and to encourage recycling of organic materials from the classroom and school lunch/snacks.

Most presentations included the establishment of a worm box in the classroom or at the school's garden. Often the class receiving the Master Gardener presentation becomes the champion of the compost education for the rest of the school or a series of grade levels. They go on to teach other students and help develop a school wide composting program.



Flyers were given to the teachers and sent home with students to encourage parents to compost and recycle at home too.



We also have compost specific tabling efforts geared towards children at large events such as Quarry Hill Earth Day, the Heirloom Exposition and the North Bay Science Fair. See Table 2 for a list of schools and presentation dates July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020.

This fiscal year our largest children centered event was participation at the National Heirloom Exposition. We had our normal tabling presence in the main Exhibitor Hall But we were also invited to participate in the Kid's Pavilion for three day of hands on worm and compost critters activities.



Over the three day festival we had 1,159 contacts of mostly children and a few adults. Children were encouraged to look into our worm bin and compost critter plates. They could use magnifying glasses and containers to see decomposers close up. We also had a food sorting game where children could learn how to feed the worms correctly. We also had a Compost Critters poster showing the different decomposers they might meet in a compost pile or worm bin. We were awarded an Honorable Mention Ribbon for our interactive table.

**Table 2.** Master Gardener School and Event Vermicomposting Presentations

| SCHOOL                             | DATE        | CONTACTS    |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Heirloom Exposition Kids Pavillion | 09/10-12/19 | 1159        |
| Westside School Healdsburg         | 09/25/19    | 43          |
| Proctor Terrace Elementary         | 10/17/19    | 132         |
| Steel Lane Elementary              | 12/11/19    | 159         |
| Steel Lane Elementary              | 12/16/19    | 163         |
| Parkside Elementary School         | 02/28/20    | 67          |
|                                    |             |             |
|                                    |             | Total 1,723 |

### Resource Desks

The Master Gardeners maintain an Information Desk at the UCCE Sonoma office at 133 Aviation Boulevard, Suite 109 in Santa Rosa. We provide answers to walk-in clientele, and via e-mail and phone for gardening questions in Santa Rosa three days per week. This is one of the core functions of our organization and a key resource for educating the community. Due to COVID 19 changes we no longer are accepting walk in specimens or live requests but are still actively checking our email and phone messages and responding accordingly.

For fiscal year 2019-20 trained Master Gardeners answered questions related to home gardening from 1,696 people.

### Educational Brochures

The Master Gardeners distributed copies of educational brochures about home composting at all of our major events, workshops, and schools presentations. In 2019 we revamped our Home Composting brochures with updated and simplified information. We have also translated our two most prominent brochures *Hints for Composting* and *Putting to Worms to Work* into Spanish. They will be available in hard copy and our website under our Spanish section. In 2020 Zero Waste Sonoma suggested a revamping of the brochures to fit the aesthetic of their rebranding. New brochures were created and printed using funds from the Compost Workshop grant. These brochures will be distributed at future in person events, tablings and workshops.

- *Hints for Composting*
- *Recycling Tips For Gardeners*
- *Home Composting in Spanish*
- *Worm Composting*

- *Putting Worms To Work And Keeping Them Happy*
- *Ponga Las Lombices de Tierra a Trabajar y Manténgalas Felices (Worm Composting in Spanish)*

In addition to our brochures, we have on hand the Zero Waste Sonoma's *Recycling Guide*. We refer to it directly during the Compost Workshops, point out the do's and don't's list. And remind participants they do not have to take a hardcopy as it is all available on the ZWS website. During the virtual workshops we introduced Zero Waste Sonoma as the county's resource for all questions related to reuse, recycling, or proper waste disposal. We displayed the logo and website and acknowledge their funding for this program and for our Worms in the Schools Program.

## Master Gardener Website

The UCMGSC website ([ucanr.edu/sonomamg](http://ucanr.edu/sonomamg)) offers many resources for the home gardener, including a variety of composting publications that can be accessed at <http://ucanr.edu/sonomamg>.

The screenshot shows the website header with the University of California logo and the text "UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County". Navigation links include "Español", "Food Gardening", "Garden Help", "Garden Tips", "Our Projects", "Resources", and "Sustainable Home Gardening". A search bar is present with the text "Enter Search Terms" and a "GIVE" button.

The main content area is titled "Composting" and includes a "PRINT" icon. The text reads: "Composting Basics gives an overview of the process. Several publications on composting are available here:"

- [Composting-general](#)
- [Compost in a Hurry](#)
- [Rapid Compost Method](#)
- [The Compost Pile](#)
- [Countywide Community Compost Education Program Report 2018-2019](#)
- [Hints for Composting\\*](#)
- [Earthworm Ecology](#)
- [Putting Worms to Work and Keeping Them Happy\\*](#)

\* Published with assistance from [Zero Waste Sonoma](#)

Zero Waste Sonoma [features home compost information](#).

Throughout the year, we have Home Composting Workshops. You can [sign up for a Home Composting Workshop](#) or check our [Workshop Calendar](#) for future workshops or presentations.

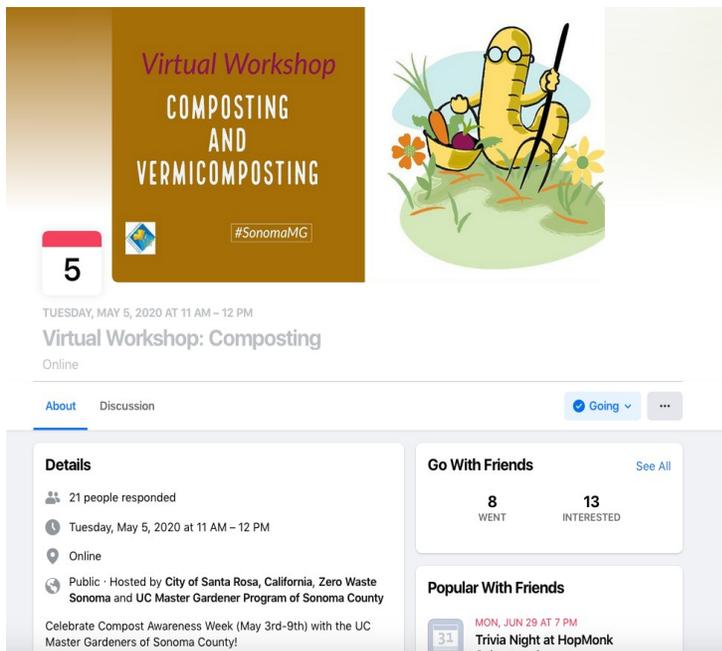
Our Composting workshops are also available on [YouTube](#) in English and Spanish.

Two promotional images are shown at the bottom right: one for a "FREE VIRTUAL COMPOSTING WORKSHOP" featuring a cartoon worm and composting materials, and another for a "VIRTUAL WORKSHOP: COMPOSTING MAY 5, 2020" by Jennifer Roberts.

The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with links to Home, About Us, California Natives, Drip Irrigation, Firewise Landscaping, Food Gardening Articles, Gardening Articles, Lawn Replacement, Plant Articles, MG Publications, Recommended Plants for Sonoma County, Waterwise Gardening, and Weeds. Below the menu is an "Information Desk" section with contact information for Santa Rosa: (707) 565-2608, Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 AM - 12 PM, 1 PM - 4 PM, and email: [mgsonoma@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgsonoma@ucdavis.edu). A note says "(If clicking this link doesn't work, type the email address in your email program)". At the bottom of the sidebar is a link for "How to get help with plant problems".

## Facebook & Instagram Pages

The UCMGSC Facebook page was created in late 2011. Through regular posting, we have created a dedicated following on Facebook and have approximately 3,800 followers. Many posts actively promote composting and our Composting Workshops are each created as a separate event. ZWS helped to promote the workshop events on their social media platforms as well. For our partnership events with the City of Santa Rosa they helped promote by including the event information in their newsletter.



Left, Screen Shot of Facebook Event for Virtual Compost Workshop.  
Right, Instagram Page with Numerous Compost Related Posts.

Our Instagram account was created in 2015. As of this writing we have 1,205 followers. It is another avenue we use to educate on basic how-to tips around waste diversion in the garden. We also use it to promote upcoming Compost Workshops, and this year's Compost Awareness Week May 3-9<sup>th</sup>, 2020. In the screenshot of the account below there are six separate postings related to compost.

This year we promoted the composting workshops heavily during Compost Awareness Week on both platforms and on the front page of our website. We attribute this promotion and new interest due to an expansion in home gardening due to SIP to the high registration numbers.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The UCMGSC home composting program has been teaching backyard composting to homeowners, apartment dwellers, and school children for more than twenty years. Each year we evaluate the program and make changes to meet the goal of reaching the largest number of people in the least time-

consuming and most rewarding ways for the participants and the Master Gardener volunteers. The group is committed to including composting and pesticide use reduction information as an essential part of gardening.

A concentration of efforts toward providing information at events where people are already present has greatly increased our numbers of contacts the last few years. Many of those contacts are made during short conversations at Master Gardener educational booths at places such as the demonstration garden and information table at the Sonoma County Fair, and weekly farmers' markets. Or through longer educational lectures or presentations at garden club talks, other fairs & festivals, community gardens, and library series presentations. A recap of our contacts for this fiscal reporting year is detailed below:

- Major Events, Information Tables, Workshops & Projects 4315
- Farmers Markets and Library Series 2292
- Information Desk, Santa Rosa 1696
  
- School children 1,723
- Website 284,346

**TOTAL 294,372**

Home composting and pesticide use reduction education has become an integral part of the Master Gardener program, and the volunteers are committed to it. A composting curriculum and an IPM (integrated pest management) program have been added to the core-training program for all new Master Gardeners, effective publications and handouts have been developed, and there is timely coordination of activities. The Master Gardeners are proud of the success of the home composting program and our outreach to the public on this topic.



### Tonnage Diversion Estimates

The Master Gardeners had direct contact with 10,116 people in FY 2019-20 at large events and workshops and over 300 smaller scale events such as farmers' markets, tours, small fairs, library presentations, and resource desk. We also distributed composting brochures through educational booths, the Master Gardener desk, and through school presentations (1,723 youth). Calculations for the tonnage diversion estimates are based on direct contacts with adults only.

Our University of California survey in 2016 indicated that 54% of respondents increased or started composting. Home composters reduced their landfill inputs by 5.6 gallons of kitchen scraps and 22 gallons of yard waste per month. Based on these figures the diversion increase for FY 2016-17 due to the addition of new home composters or increased volume by those already composting was:

- $10,116 \times 54\% = 5,463$  households beginning or increasing home composting
- **Kitchen scraps\*** diverted = 5.6 gallons per month/household = 30,593 gallons per month = 89 tons per month = 1,068 tons per year = 1,824 cubic yards per year
- **Yard waste\*** diverted = 22 gallons per month/household = 120,186 gallons per month = 252 tons per month = 3,028 tons per year = 7,141 cubic yards per year
- **TOTAL DIVERTED = 4,096 tons per year = 8,965 yd<sup>3</sup> per year**

\* *Weight and volume calculations for kitchen scraps are based on 70% moisture (5.8 lbs./gallon) (1,171 lbs./yd<sup>3</sup>). Weight and volume calculations for yard waste are based on 50% moisture (4.2 lbs./gallon) (848 lbs./yd<sup>3</sup>).*

# Home Composting Survey Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Results

## Home Composting of Yard Waste and Kitchen Scraps:

A survey is conducted with participants who provide their email address a few months after they take the workshop. This gives them time to set up a new system and settle into usage. 41 participants filled out the survey for the 2019/2020 fiscal year program. 35 filled out the survey from the virtual English workshops. Five filled out the survey from the in person English workshops. One person filled out the survey from the Spanish workshops.

When asked if participants thought this workshop was an effective way to learn about composting 97% of participants answered Yes.

One participant didn't answer Yes or No.

When asked where they heard about the Workshop Series:

- Master Gardener Email/Newsletter: 15
- Another Organization's Website/Email: 10
- Master Gardener Facebook Page: 5
- Zero Waste Sonoma Facebook Page: 2
- Master Gardener Website: 2
- City of Santa Rosa Email/Postings: 2
- Newspaper: 1
- Friend: 1
- Flyer: 1
- UCANR Newsletter: 1
- Master Gardener Instagram: 1



Of the forty one returned surveys in 2019/2020 fiscal year, twenty six respondents (%) indicated that were already composting in some form before the workshop, and twelve were not. When asked if they had changed their behavior, started or increased home composting, eleven said they had not changed, but twenty six had changed or increased their behavior.

The new systems participants started:

- Compost bins and piles at home 10
- Using their Green Bin (Curbside Pick up) 5
- Worm bins 8

Of the gardeners that are composting yard waste:

- 4% are composting more than 10 gallons of yard waste per week
- 12% are composting 10 gallons of yard waste per week
- 26% are composting 5 gallons of yard waste per week
- 7% are composting about 2 gallons of yard waste per week
- 4% are composting about 1 gallon of yard waste per week
- 19% compost less than 1 gallon per week

Of the respondents who are composting kitchen scraps:

- 14% are composting 5 or more gallons of kitchen scraps per week
- 26% are composting 2 gallons kitchen scraps per week
- 19% are composting 1 gallons kitchen scraps per week
- 7% are composting 3/4 gallon kitchen scraps per week
- 7% are composting 1/2 gallon of kitchen scraps per week



Of those respondents who are not composting all yard waste or kitchen scraps in a pile or worm bin:

- 0% take the waste to the landfill on their own
- 41% use the green yard waste container
- 2% dispose of kitchen scraps in other ways (feed to chickens, bury in garden, feed to dog, etc.)
- 2% Take to other facility (Grab N' Grow)
- 0% discard their kitchen scraps into the regular trash
- 2% put it into the garbage disposal

When asked if participants wanted more information on composting 68% said Yes.

When asked how they would like to receive more information, they chose:

Video: 16

Master Gardener Website: 13

Another Workshop: 10

Master Gardener Facebook Page: 8

Brochure: 3

### **Conclusions:**

The number of people indicating that they had started, increased and continued composting was nearly 100% of those surveyed.

This indicates that Master Gardeners continue to do a good job in reaching people one-on-one with a longer format direct message rather than just giving them a brochure about composting. There has also been a steady interest in home gardening over the last three years with a corresponding increase in interest in home composting. And during COVID 19 we have seen a very large increase in interest in home gardening topics, including how to compost.



There is a large range in the amount of yard waste composted each week by residents. But the majority report composting around 5 gallons of yard waste per week. The second largest group is less than 1 gallon per week. This is likely because they do not have a yard space and are primarily composting kitchen food scraps.

Most composters are putting about 1-2 gallons of kitchen scraps per week into compost piles or worm bin systems, with another portion putting over 5 gallons in per week.

Of the people who responded, nearly every person who was not composting at home before the workshop had changed their behavior. Those who did not change their behavior, all but one indicated they were using the Curbside Pick-up green bin.

On the average, households that the Master Gardeners have taught through compost workshops are composting 1.9 gallons of kitchen scraps and over 4.59 gallons of yard waste each week, for a total average amount of 6.49 gallons per week. That is 77.9 gallons per month – 935 gallons per year.

If you multiply this by all participants in the workshops, 272, not just those that returned surveys, we see a potential diversion of 1,765 gallons per week, and 91,795 gallons per year. This program has led to a significant reduction in landfill inputs of green waste over the last few years. UCMGSC is happy to support Zero Waste Sonoma's community education efforts to help reach Sonoma County's goal of zero waste!

