

C.S.I. Manitoba

(Compost Scene Investigation)

What's New at RCM

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Spring is here! Yahoo! As you are all aware, spring means more time spent playing with your compost heap. The cold has not slowed down volunteer activity these past two months. Twenty-two volunteers have contributed to the Compost Action Project (CAP) since the last newsletter! Thank you for your time and effort! The Home Expressions Show went really well this year and we had fantastic Master Composter events; one requiring some physical effort and resulting in a few blisters (see inside for details). Regular gatherings keep the group vibrant and allow Master Composters to network, generating more composting ideas and encouraging team effort.

On another note, I'm happy to announce that Sara Perlmutter, past CAP Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator, has been hired as the Commuter Challenge Coordinator at RCM. This year the Challenge is from June 3th to June 9th, so make a point of choosing sustainable transportation like jumping on your bike or hopping on the bus! For more information on this friendly competition and to sign up, visit RCM's website. I hope you enjoy this edition of CSI Manitoba that Francine Carrier has produced.

Sylvie Hébert, Compost Action Project Coordinator

-Master Composter Contributions-

February

- Lorraine traced out over 1000 worm-shaped bookmarks and cut out over 450.
- Karen prepared and did a presentation for the MC Appreciation event.
- Richard contributed to his project of designing kids composting booklets.
- Jennifer was a display attendant at Seedy Saturday.
- Lise was a display attendant at Seedy Saturday.

March

- Master Composters that worked the Home Show booth as display attendants: Glenn, Art, Bruno, Lee, Lise, Karen, Donna, Ernie, Sherron, Tony, Michael, Kaz, Ted, Jennifer and Natasha
- Master Composters that facilitated presentations at the Home Show: Art and Julio
- Ted helped set up and take down our display booth at the Home Show.
- Lorraine did a workshop in Fisher Branch.
- Amanda did some classroom presentations on vermi-composting.
- Jennifer set up a vermi-compost bin for a friend.
- Tony cut up worm bookmarks for the upcoming Children's Festival.
- Master Composters that came to the worm bookmark cutting party: Georgina, Jeremy, Melanie, Sherron, Michaeline, Donna, and Richard
- Richard continued work on his innovative project.

Congratulations!

The following Master Composters have completed ...

30 hours of volunteer time :

- Karen
- Mike
- Richard
- Lise

50 hours of volunteer time:

- Tony
- Mary

Thanks so much for your help and all your time and effort!

Master Composter Appreciation Event– February 8

On February 8, Resource Conservation Manitoba hosted the winter Master Composter Appreciation event at the Eco-Centre boardroom. The 18 guests started arriving around 6 pm, giving them time to sample from the buffet and mingle and chat with others in attendance.

By 7 pm, everyone gathered in the boardroom in preparation for the evening's two presentations. During a short welcome, Sylvie and Francine also presented Richard with a thermometer and certificate for the completion of his 30-hour volunteer commitment.

The first speaker of the evening was Master Composter Karen Jones who showed a power point presentation and talked about soil types and humus composition and formation. Her presentation contained technical

information on how composting aids in the development of future healthy soils.

After a short break to stretch out legs and replenish beverages, the second presentation by past CAP assistant Sara Permutter began. Slides of pictures accompanied her talk on her recent adventures to Uganda, Africa. Her account of her intriguing experiences sparked many questions and comments from the audience.

The night finished off with a draw for the door prize of a backpack, water-bottle and RCM long-sleeved shirt.. Congratulations to the winner, Master Composter Michaeline Merkeley!

Thanks once again to the presenters for the great job and to all the guests for coming out on such a cold winters night.



Master Composters heard from Karen Jones about composting and healthy soil.

The 2007 Home Expressions Show

On March 8th to 11th, Resource Conservation participated in the Home Expressions Show which took place at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. Our display booth gave us a great opportunity to showcase the benefits of composting to a large portion of Winnipeg's public. This year, RCM was also asked to give composting presentations on the second floor feature stage. These stage appearances, one on each day of the Home Show, not only increased our composting audience, but also gave RCM some fabulous exposure.

Our display booth was set up differently this year, allowing for interested

right into our booth to browse our display board. Also available at our booth was all our fact sheets, many composting tools and items on display and a draw for guests to enter to win an Earth Machine Composter. This year's lucky winner was Elaine Taylor Turchyn from St. Vital.



Master Composters Ted and Art educating Home Show participants at the RCM booth.

In total over the four-day event, 873 people visited our kiosk and 1515 fact sheets were distributed. The draw was quite popular, with a total of 470 people entering their names to win an Earth Machine, which the City of Winnipeg donated. At the Feature Stage, 62 attended the presentations and 399 fact sheets were handed out then.

Montrose Park Compost Demonstration Site 2006

By Mary Popien, Site Coordinator and Honorary Master Composter

Montrose Park contains several ornamental gardens planted with cultivated as well as indigenous plants. The garden project was planned and planted by a group of community volunteers with the permission of the City of Winnipeg's Adopt-A-Park Project. The gardens are maintained by this group of volunteers. Composting is an important component of this garden project. Garden waste is composted on site and is used as a soil conditioner and fertilizer in the gardens. This garden project has been in place for nine years.

In preparation for composting in the winter of 2005/2006, a large amount of "Green" garden waste in the form of daylily leaves was delivered to our site by a fellow gardener. This made it possible to layer new piles using "Brown" dry leaves that were available in our park. Additional dry leaves were collected, mulched, bagged and stored in our park shed for use in the compost bins throughout the winter. Thank you to Kaz Sawicz and Don Popien for their help with the two truck loads of leaves. During the winter the "Green" component for the layers placed in the compost bin came from my own kitchen as well as from the lunch program at Montrose School.

In early spring of 2006 the piles heated up quickly. The piles were turned and the partially composted material was placed into one bin making room for more additions from spring garden clean up which took place in May. Some finished compost was available to use in the gardens at that time.

The growing season in 2006 was long, dry and hot making it necessary to water the gardens more than usual. As a result of the watering we had ample "Green" material for our compost bins even though we were experiencing a drought. The remaining mulched dry leaves were layered with the "Green" material from the gardens and my home kitchen. A couple of helpers from RCM's Green Team visited the Montrose Park site in July and helped with turning and watering the compost. The appearance of the bins was enhanced with a coat of green acrylic paint that was applied to the exterior of the bins. The addition of the green paint helps to blend the bins into the landscape.

In the autumn of 2006 the remaining finished compost was removed from the bins. As the compost was somewhat dry it was mulched with our mulching mower. The resulting fine compost was perfect for use in planting perennial divisions and bulbs. My husband Don Popien was a great help with all aspects of managing the compost site.

Worm Bookmark Cutting

On Wednesday, March 21st, 13 volunteers gathered in the RCM boardroom to take on the heroic challenge of cutting as many worm-shaped bookmarks as time, or blisters, would allow. For the International Children's Festival in June, CAP will have a display that will allow kids to decorate their very own wiggly bookmark. The four-day event held at The Forks has been very popular in past years, so lots of bookmarks are needed.

Thanks to everyone's efforts, over 1500 worm bookmarks were ready to go by the end of the evening.



Master Composters Georgina and Jeremy helped cut over 1500 bookmarks!

Compost Awareness Week Workshops

In celebration of Compost Awareness Week (May 6 to 12th), RCM is planning a day of workshops that will go beyond the basics of backyard composting. On Sunday, May 6th, the afternoon will start off with a basic composting workshop at 1 pm at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory. At 2 pm, Master Composters Lois, Tony and Donna will be demonstrating how easy it is to build your own compost bin at home. The recycled pallet bin and the single-heap wood bin will be featured. The next workshop at 3:30 pm will have participants building their very own compost separator screen that they can take home when they're done.

These workshops will be held outside, by their compost demonstration site. The rain date is June 3rd. Participants may choose to attend all or just one of the workshops, but must register, as spacing is limited.

Another CAW workshop is planned for Tuesday, May 8th, which will give participants the opportunity to learn about vermi-composting and set up their own bin that evening. It will take place in the RCM boardroom, will start at 7 pm and will also require participants to register.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Article Writers for newsletter always welcome! Next deadline is June 15th.

Display Attendants— two are needed for **Earth Day** display, April 22 from 9:30 to 3:30 pm at the Living Prairie Museum.

Workshop Presenter is required for a basic backyard composting workshop at the Assiniboine Park Conservatory on May 6th at 1 pm.

Workshop Presenter is needed for a basic vermi-composting workshop here in the RCM boardroom on May 8th at 7 pm.

Display attendants needed for Bin Sale, May 26th. Four locations: St. James Civic Centre, Garden City Shopping Mall, Kildonan Place, St. Vital Centennial Arena. Option to work the whole day (7 am to 4 pm), an early morning shift (7 am to 11:30 am) or late morning (11:30 am to 4 pm) shift. Duties might include transporting materials to and from Bin Sale locations; communicating with coordinators and go for coffee runs (car and cell phone required).

Phone Operator needed to staff the compost infoline after the Bin Sale. May be done from the comfort of your own home.

Workshop Presenters needed for Backyard Composting Workshop Series following the Bin Sale. Library locations are: Pembina Trails, Louis Riel, Millennium, St. James-Assiniboia, Sir William Stephenson, Westwood, Henderson Library, St. Vital, Monroe, Transcona and St. Boniface. Dates are from May 28 to June 15th.

Workshop Pair-up Opportunities-

Are you a Master Composter who has always wanted to gain more experience facilitating workshops? Well, here's your chance! Pair-up with an accomplished facilitator during the bin sale workshops and hone your presenting skills.

Display Attendants needed for the **International Children's Festival**, June 7 to 10th, at the Forks. Morning and Afternoon shifts available.

Next MC Appreciation Event: Solar Solutions Tour

In celebration of National Volunteer Week, all Master Composters are invited out to the next appreciation event, taking place on April 21st. From 10 to 11 am, our group will be taken on a tour of Solar Solutions, a local distributor of renewable energy and conservation devices. The tour will give Solar Solutions the chance to show off their technology for the environment, including solar electric panels, wind generators and composting toilets. It will also give participants the opportunity to ask questions about these products and

learn the fundamentals of renewable energy in Winnipeg.

If you are interested in coming on the tour, please RSVP to Francine by phone at 925-3775 before April 19th.

Everyone will be responsible for their own transportation to and from the event. If you can provide rides for others in your area or are interested in car-pooling, please contact the office. Solar Solutions is located at 6-130 Midland Road. Possibility of going out for coffee afterwards, for anyone interested.

Compost Infoline
925-3775

The Compost Action Project of Resource Conservation Manitoba publishes the *C.S.I. Manitoba* on a quarterly basis. If you know someone who would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, please pass along our contact information.

This newsletter is also available on our website at www.resourceconservation.mb.ca

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