



Community-Scale Composting Systems

A Comprehensive Practical Guide for Closing the Food System Loop and Solving Our Waste Crisis

James McSweeney

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Full-color photographs and illustrations throughout

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“Community composters embody the spirit of innovation and creativity and this helps build the foundation for positive change and civic engagement.”

—**NORA GOLDSTEIN**, editor of *BioCycle*

Community-scale composting is coming of age, marked by a profusion of new interest and agri-preneurial composting ventures. Take two things, composting and community—each held in high esteem by the eco-conscious of today, and two things that have never been more needed on our planet—and put them together. This is why we have a movement on our hands.

James McSweeney has worked with hundreds of composters, large and small, on everything from site planning, design, and management to compost heat recovery and livestock feeding systems. From that experience, he has created this book as a technical resource for farmers, designers, service providers, and organics recycling entrepreneurs and advocates of all types, with a focus on developing small- and even micro-scale infrastructure that can enable communities to return sustenance to soils in their local food system, including chapters on:

- Recycling organics at the community scale and making waste management compatible with our food system
- Common models in community-scale composting
- Methods and technologies including bin and bay, turned windrow, in-vessel, vermicomposting, and aerated static pile (ASP) compost systems
- Recipes and feedstocks, looking at key factors such as bulk density, moisture content, and avoiding and managing contamination
- Composting with animals: systems, safety and regulation, animal feed, and nutritional value of food scraps as animal feed
- Site management including operator training, sourcing and capturing raw materials, pile monitoring and management, and quality control standards
- Compost end uses and markets

McSweeney covers all this and more, saying: “Composters, this book is yours. There are no boundaries to confine where this information can be applied. Take it, test it, adapt it, make it your own, and share what you’ve learned.”



James McSweeney is a composting consultant and educator. He coauthored *Growing Local Fertility: A Guide to Community Composting* and has been an ardent proponent and collaborator in the community composting movement in the United States. With a background in agroecology and permaculture, restoring ecological integrity to our local farm and food systems is at the heart of James’ work.

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