

On-farm Composting at an Organic Community Farm

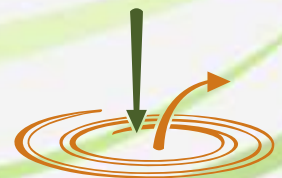
Peter Engel

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Recycle Florida Today, Annual Conference

St. Augustine, FL

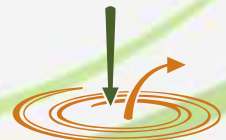
June 14, 2016



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About Sweetwater Organic Community Farm

- Established in 1995
- Nonprofit, urban, certified-organic farm in Tampa
- 6-acre site
- Focuses on education and community development
- Produce is sold through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program and Sunday Market



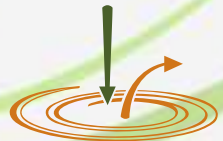
Composting at Sweetwater

- Sweetwater composts manure and bedding from Lowry Park Zoo in Tampa
- Has a small compost site adjacent to main farm and a larger facility at its satellite farm



Food residuals compost project

In 2010, the Florida Organics Recycling Center for Excellence (FORCE) and KCI partnered with Sweetwater and Tampa General Hospital (TGH) for an on-farm food residuals composting demonstration project.



Food residuals compost project

TGH collected source-separated, pre-consumer vegetative food residuals over 4 weeks.

COMPOSTABLES ONLY
From Food Preparation Areas and Buffet Lines
NO Plate Scrapings



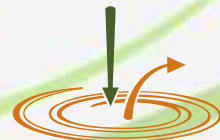
Fruit

Vegetables

Grains and Bread

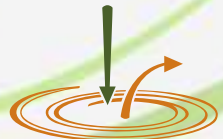
Coffee Grounds, Tea & Filters

- NO Meat, Dairy or Eggs
- NO Liquids or Sauces
- NO Grease, Oil or Butter
- NO Paper, Plastic, or Metal



Food residuals compost project

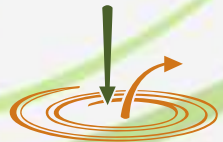
TGH transported food residuals to Sweetwater, where they were inspected prior to composting



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Food residuals compost project

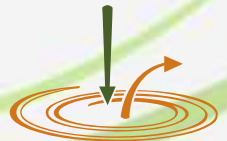
Sweetwater blended food residuals
and animal bedding



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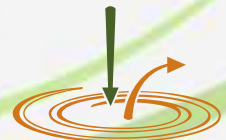
Food residuals compost project

Small compost piles built each week



Food residuals compost project

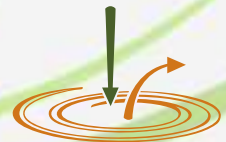
Piles turned 5 times within 15 days
for pathogen reduction



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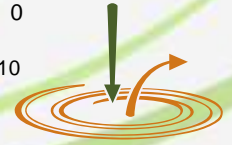
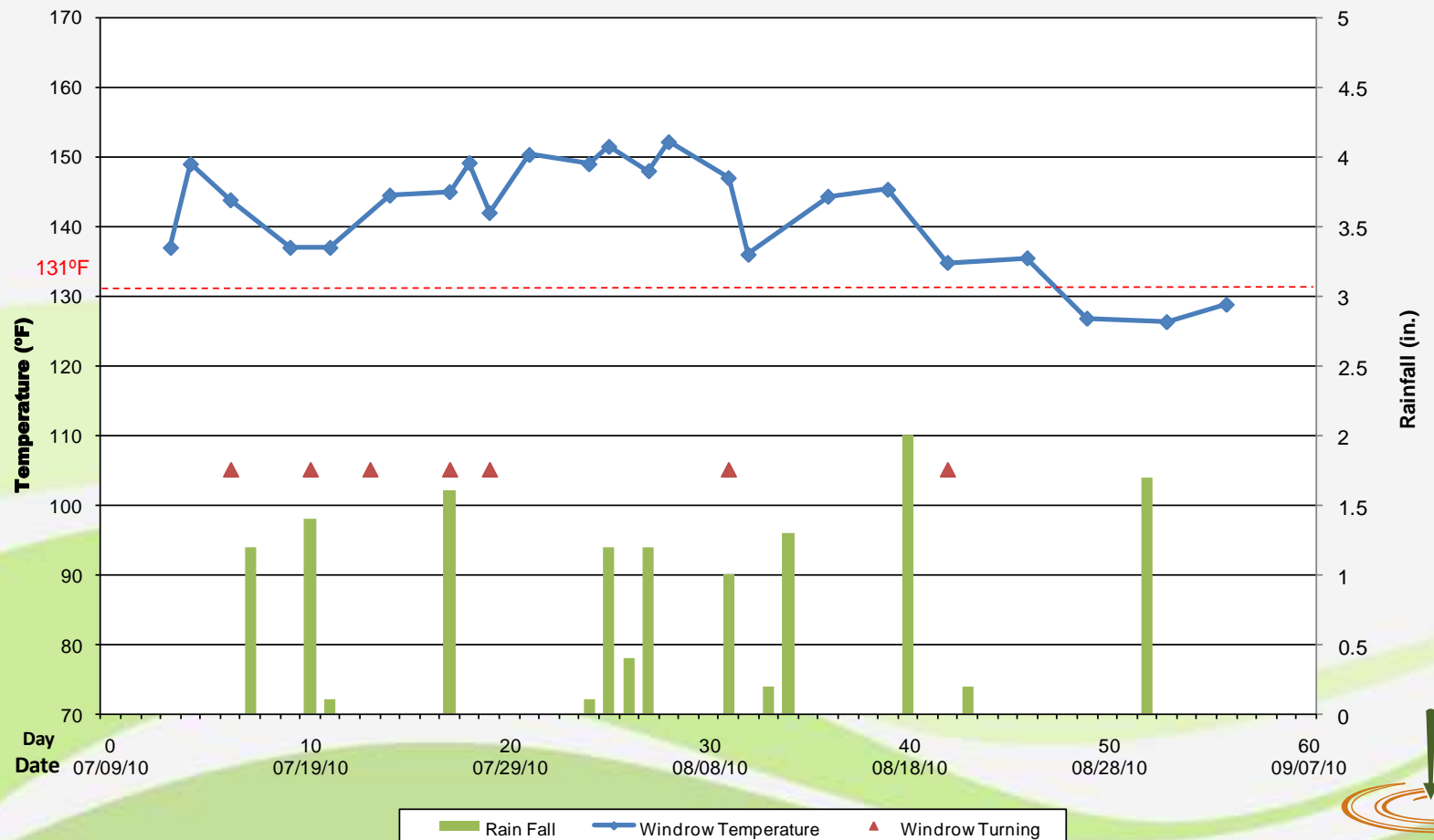
Food residuals compost project

Temperatures were monitored daily



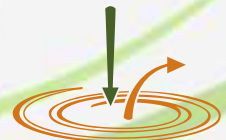
Food residuals compost project

Example Temperature Chart



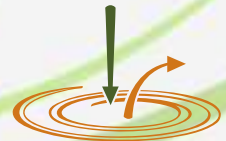
Food residuals compost project

- Compost cured for 60-70 days then used on the farm



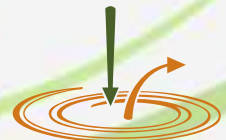
Food residuals compost project

This project demonstrated that composting on small farms plays a critical role in closed-loop, local organic waste management.



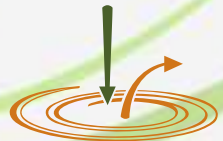
RFT ELLS Event - October 8, 2015

- Toured Sweetwater's compost site and farm.
- About 20 attendees from the public and private sectors.



RFT ELLS Event - October 8, 2015

- Attendees learned about the critical role composting plays in organic agriculture.
- Small scale composting keeps organic resources within the community.
- Sweetwater is more than just a local farm. It is a community space that trains citizens in organic agriculture and sustainable practices.



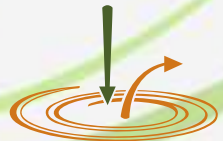
Thank you!



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