

2023 Master Composter Certification Program Syllabus

Locations: The 2023 program will be a hybrid program with two in-person Saturday sessions, September 16 & 30 along with two evening online sessions, September 21 & 28 via WebEx. The two Saturday classes will be held at the Middlesex County Extension Center, 1066 Saybrook Rd, Haddam, CT 06438.

Textbooks: There will not be specific required readings for this class but we suggest that you acquire at least one good reference book and two that we found useful are the Rodale Book of Composting, Deborah L. Martin & Grace Gershuny, editors (Rodale Press 1992) [ISBN 0-87857-991-5 paperback] or The Complete Compost Gardening Guide by Barbara Pleasant & Deborah L. Martin (Storey Publishing 2008) [ISBN 978-1-58017-3].

More excellent information can be found in the Cornell Master Composter Resource Manual, which is in the second half of a PDF file called the Cornell Waste Management Institute Master Composter Program Guide & Resource Manual. The PDF file can be downloaded at www.cwmi.css.cornell.edu/mastercompostermanual.pdf If you are having difficulty accessing this address, enter “Cornell Master Composter Resource Manual” into Google. The New York City Master Composter manual ([Master Composter Manual \(nyc.gov\)](http://www.nyc.gov)) also has lots of good information especially when thinking about setting up an outreach education program.

CLASS ONE: Saturday, September 16, 2023, 10 am – 2:30 pm

Introduction & Brief Overview of Program

Coordinator: Dawn Pettinelli, UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab, Associate Extension Educator

Basic Principles of Composting

Lecturer: Gail Reynolds, M.F.S., UConn Master Gardener & Master Composter Coordinator, Middlesex County Extension Center

Concepts in Compost Chemistry -- Contaminants & Testing

Lecturer: Robert J. Rafka, Ph.D., URI Master Composter & Recycler, URI MG

Tour of Haddam Extension Office Compost display area

Led by: Jamie Burgess, Master Composter & Master Gardener

CLASS TWO: Thursday, September 21, 2023 from 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Designing a Compost Recipe & Using Compost Calculators

Lecturer: Domingo Medina, Ph. D. Founder, Owner and Operator of Peels & Wheels Composting in New Haven and UConn Master Composter

Composting Structures

Lecturer: Dawn Pettinelli

CLASS THREE: Thursday, September 28, 2023 from 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Compost & Phosphorus/Using Compost in the Landscape

Lecturer: Dawn Pettinelli

Compost Troubleshooting:

Lecturer: Gail Reynolds, M.F.S., UConn Master Gardener & Master Composter Coordinator, Middlesex County Extension Center

Community Composting Examples:

Lecturers: Alice Ely, Master Composter, Advance Master Gardener, Garden Education Chair at Westport's Wakeman Town Farm: **Tips for Composting in Community Gardens**

Thomas Iezin, Master Composter, Lead Marketing & Communications, Assistant Operations Manager & Lead Educator, Park City Compost Initiative (PCCI): **Tips for School Compost Projects**

Kim O'Rourke, Middletown Recycling Coordinator, Master Composter, **Examples of Municipal Compost Programs**

CLASS FOUR: Saturday, September 30, 2023, 10 am – 2:30 pm

Beneficial and Harmful Earthworms, and their Impact on the Ecosystem

Lecturer: Josef Gorres, PhD, University of Vermont

Vermicomposting – Science and Biology,

Monique Bosch, Wiggle Room LLC.

Vermicomposting

Lecturer: Gail Reynolds, M.F.S., UConn Master Gardener & Master Composter Coordinator, Middlesex County Extension Center

Final Word on Composting and Tips for Educational Events

Outreach; UConn Master Composter Resources/ Q & A

Lecturer: Dawn Pettinelli, Gail Reynolds

Make Your Own Worm Bin – You bring the materials, and we'll supply the worms!

Field Trip #1 – WeCareDenali Composting Operation, 235 Sadds Mill Road, Ellington, CT. Exact time not confirmed but likely 9 or 9:30 to 11 am on Saturday, October 14

Field Trip #2 – Hands-on creating and maintaining a compost pile. Sunday, October 22 from 12 noon to 2 pm. Park City Compost Initiative (PCCI), Bridgeport, CT.

Community Outreach Project Requirements: Each Master Composter intern will be required to complete two separate community outreach projects in order to qualify for graduation volunteering about 20 hours of their time. Details of the types of outreach will be discussed in Class 4. Projects must be completed by November graduation.

Graduation: In addition to the two outreach projects, interns must attend all four sessions in order to qualify for graduation. A graduation ceremony will be held in early November 2024.

UConn Master Composters make a difference!