

What is Composting?

Composting is the act of gathering spoiled food or food scraps such as banana peels, half-eaten sandwiches, or coffee grounds for the purpose of recycling them naturally. This process is a fantastic opportunity to engage both students and staff in learning about the impact of their food waste and the benefits of repurposing the waste.

Why Start Composting?

- Decreases food waste
- Lowers cost of trash removal
- Protects the environment
- Provides a unique educational opportunity for students

Different Composting Opportunities

There are two popular options for composting in schools:

Do-It-Yourself

Creating your own composting program is a great way to get students involved in the whole process. There are several ways to create composting bins, small or large, that can serve as a teaching tool for students.

[Check out nhfarmtoschool.org for tips and tricks!](http://www.nhfarmtoschool.org)

- <http://www.nhfarmtoschool.org/compost--recycling-resources.html>

Utilize a Compost Service

There are multiple composting services that are happy to compost food scraps from schools. Students may help collect the compost prior to collection in order to learn about what they are throwing away.

[Visit these local composters to learn more!](#)

- <https://mrfoxcomposting.com>
- <https://nesolidwaste.com/organic-waste-division/>

Key Composting Resources:

- Learn more about Divert Inc. to see if they're array of services from food rescue to cardboard recycling could be feasible where you work!
 - www.divetrinc.com
- For a comprehensive How-To guide created by the Department of Environmental Services, visit:
 - http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/waste/swrtas/documents/compost_guide.pdf
- Check out this link for New Hampshire state guidelines for composting in schools:
 - https://nerc.org/documents/compost_fertilizer/nh_compost_and_fertilizer_regs.pdf



What About Other Schools?

Many schools around the Granite State have taken advantage of this opportunity to teach their students. These schools include: Somersworth Middle School, New Boston Central School, Belmont High School, and Oyster River Cooperative School District.

A Look at New Hampshire School Case Studies

Oyster River Cooperative School District:

This district uses the services of Mr. Fox. This company provides composting bins to schools, as well as other businesses and private homes. The company picks up the compost on either a weekly or biweekly schedule at a designated cost. For schools, Mr. Fox also provides education on composting to the students and faculty.

How did it start?

The fourth grade class at Moharimet, one of the schools in the district, was the first to begin the composting project. The fourth grade students were then able to share what they learned with other grades so that they too could start a composting program. They even went to the other schools (including middle and high school) to teach those students more about their program.

Belmont High School:

Belmont began the composting program with four adults plus a group of students who were part of a science club at the school. Together this group built a four bin compost outside of the school. The compost is transported from the school to the bin in a 55-gallon garbage can that is lined with a plastic bag. The school stated that this is light enough for two students to carry outside together. The school measures the food scraps prior to bringing them outside to the compost. This allows them to track their food waste and better estimate the amount of bulking agent needed.

Somersworth Middle School:

Somersworth Middle School is starting the composting program with five sixth grade students and one teacher. The students are planning on educating the rest of the sixth grade on what can and cannot be composted. Most of this education will take place in the cafeteria when the students help others determine which bins to place their trash in. This grade will continue composting when they enter the seventh grade, and the new sixth graders will be educated on the program. Thanks to the success, Somersworth School District is planning to implement a district-wide composting initiative.

New Boston Central School:

The sixth grade class at New Boston Central School are the first in their district to start a composting program. Students have taken the initiative to collect food scraps from the cafeteria kitchen and bring them outside to their homemade four-bin compost pile. Over the school year, the students were able to test different composting techniques in a trial and error process to produce adequate compost that was not too dry or too wet. After several attempts the sixth grade class struck success with the right consistency by using a tarp in the winter and exposing it to partial sunlight and rain during the other seasons.



There are many different types of composting bins styles. This one is a store-bought plastic bin. Building your own composting may be feasible if you're working with an older grade level!

Contact Us!

NH Farm to School is a statewide program working to connect NH farms and schools. Farm to School connections enable schools to serve healthy, locally grown foods in their cafeterias, integrate farms, food and nutrition curriculum, and explore food and agriculture-based learning opportunities.

For further information, please contact:

Stacey Purslow
NH Farm to School
Coordinator
Sustainability Institute
107 Nesmith Hall
131 Main St. Durham, NH
03824

603-862-2542

Stacey.Purslow@unh.edu