

# Compost Delivery



eco-cycle

## Snapshot

For a school that has implemented a compost collection program, providing finished compost for staff and families to use (at home or school) serves as a useful reward and incentive to continue composting.

<https://bit.ly/eco-cycle-zero-waste-schools-guide>

**Objective:** Students will understand how the food and paper waste they put into compost bins at their school turns into a valuable soil amendment.

**Age Group:** K-12<sup>th</sup> grade and adults

**Setting:** School parking lot or other vehicle-accessible outdoor space

**Project Duration:** 2 days

### Materials:

- Finished compost (delivered)
- Shovels and hand trowels
- Sturdy plastic bags (used, if possible)
- Poster-making materials
- Informative flyers

## Why This Project Matters:

Finished compost is a valuable soil amendment that results in stronger, healthier plants without the use of synthetic chemical fertilizers. Using finished compost and raising awareness about its benefits is just as important for a healthy environment as keeping compostable items out of the landfill.

## Project Summary:

A delivery of finished compost to a school that has implemented a compost collection program has enormous benefits to the school community. The finished compost provides a direct link between the food scraps and non-recyclable paper collected at school and the resulting compost. Families and school staff will be able to take the compost home to use on their own yards and gardens. The school may also use it to amend school gardens and landscaping.

## Implementation:

1. Contact a local compost facility for prices of finished compost by volume and the cost of delivery.
2. Decide if the finished compost will be used for school grounds and gardens only, or if it will also be offered to families and staff. Order the adequate amount needed.
3. Coordinate delivery dates with school administration. (This project works best in the springtime.)
4. If the finished compost will be applied to school gardens, consider coordinating with student and parent groups to organize a community workday to assist with this project.



5. Coordinate with administration to determine the best location for the finished compost to be delivered. The site should be close to the school so that families will see and remember to come and pick up compost. The site should also be out of the way of all traffic (school buses, student drop-off, delivery trucks, and recycling/waste trucks).
6. Finalize the dates and arrange with the local compost company for delivery and pick up. (It is best if the compost comes in a large roll-off container.) With sufficient advertising to the school community, one or two full school days (including 30 minutes before the school day begins and 1-2 hours after the school day ends) of availability is usually adequate. Establish a pick-up of any remaining compost so the school is not charged for what is not used.
7. Encourage a student group to develop announcements and posters advertising the compost delivery event to the school community. Include reminders to bring shovels and containers (plastic bins, bags, etc.). Determine a quantity limit for each person.
8. Develop other communication pieces to invite families and staff to take finished compost for their own use (school newsletter, email, school website, social media, signage near the entrance and student pick-up/drop-off areas, etc.).
9. Organize volunteers to assist with the compost delivery event, especially during the high traffic times just before the school day begins and right after it ends. Adult volunteers will need to be prepared to answer general questions or pass out literature about compost application, ideas for where to acquire backyard compost bins, local resources for composting workshops (if available), and information about the school's compost collection system. A student group may also assist with shoveling and loading compost into vehicles. If there is a Master Gardener program in your area (often housed with County Extension Agents), they may be able to help. Many Master Gardeners maintain their "master" status by volunteering for community needs.

**Assessment:**

As students are loading finished compost into their family vehicle or watching it being applied to the school grounds, ask where it came from (help make the connections between their lunchroom apple cores and the dark brown finished compost).

**Related Activities:**

Schoolwide Compost Collection – Chapter 25

**Extensions:**

- Create a research project to identify the living decomposers that turn organic waste into finished compost.
- Study other factors necessary for decomposition (water, sunlight, oxygen).
- Have students illustrate the progress of food scraps decomposing into finished compost (the nutrient cycle) by creating and displaying posters using photos and/or drawings near the compost delivery site.

