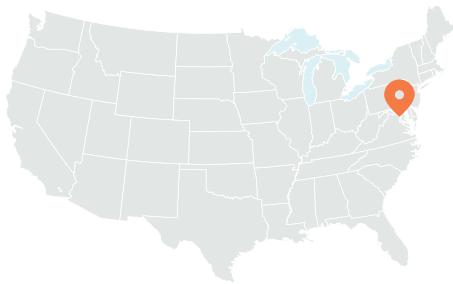




Cheverly, Maryland

▲ FreeGarden™ Earth offered by the Backyard Composting Project. Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance



POPULATION:

6,469

PROGRAM START DATE:

April 2011

BIN TYPE AND PRICE TO RESIDENTS:

FreeGarden™ Earth from Enviro World Corporation – \$20

BINS DISTRIBUTED:

Approximately 400 total in 2014

TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

No training available

Program Summary

Doug Alexander, a resident of Cheverly and the organizer of the Newspapers in Education Institute’s Backyard Composting project, chose Cheverly to be a pilot program for the Backyard Composting project. He started the program with \$4,700 in grant funding from the town of Cheverly, the nonprofit Chesapeake Bay Trust, and other local non- and for-profit organizations. He used that money to buy Soil Saver composting units from Horizon Plastics for \$40 a bin. He then sold these bins for \$20 to residents, both onsite at the Cheverly Community Market and via email request. The money from the sales was used to purchase additional bins. Currently, residents can purchase bins at the Cheverly Department of Public Works (DPW), and if needed, the DPW can also deliver bins to residents.

Starting in 2013, Doug Alexander solidified the model that he now uses in Cheverly and other participating jurisdictions. The same year, the Town of Cheverly started budgeting about \$1,500 per year for the Backyard Composting project in its jurisdiction. The Backyard Composting project will match an investment of \$6 to \$11.50 by a jurisdiction to purchase pallets of EnviroWorld FreeGarden™ Earth compost bins (the exact amount matched is determined by the price of the shipping contract arranged with the particular jurisdiction, as discussed below). The Backyard Compost Project now offers these bins instead of the Soil Saver. The participating jurisdiction also pays an additional \$20 per unit that can be recouped through charging residents for the bins. Each bin actually costs only \$31 through the project’s contract with the vendors, but shipping varies from \$3 to \$14 per bin depending on the volume of the order and shipping location. Other municipalities throughout Maryland are now participating in the Backyard Composting project, with the latest delivery of 800 bins to Frederick, Bowie, Greenbelt, Brunswick, and Boonsboro costing \$31 per unit plus \$3 each for shipping. The project guarantees that municipalities’ investments will be returned within a year of the launch of the program or the project will refund the difference.



Turning trash into treasure
Doug Alexander of Cheverly checks on the progress of his compost pile Sept. 27. Alexander is making an effort to get 25 percent of Cheverly's single-family households composting, which is expected to save the town \$150,000 in waste tipping fees during 10 years.

In 2014, the Project reached 400 bin sales within Cheverly. Sales per year are now fairly low. As people move in and out of the town each year, it is likely that the number of bins in use in Cheverly has leveled out at around 400, which is 25% of its 1,600 single-family homes.

Budget

Cheverly originally budgeted \$4,500 for three years starting in 2013, and has invested just under \$4,000 to date. Now that residents are only buying about 20 bins per year, the town is barely spending any money to maintain the program.

Staffing

Mostly run by Doug Alexander as a volunteer resident. Cheverly Department of Public Works provides bins at its facility or by delivery.

Partners

The following nonprofit programs have donated to the program in Cheverly: The Cheverly Garden Club, Progressive Cheverly, The Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek, and Chesapeake Bay Trust. These donated funds were matched by the Town of Cheverly and the Backyard Composting project, increasing the funding to \$16,000 total. Doug Alexander recommends that towns secure this sort of outside funding so that the municipality maximizes the potential amount of money they can get from the project's matching grant.

Impact and Benefits/Costs

The expected savings for the Town of Cheverly is about \$147.50 per bin over 10 years: a number based on an estimated 0.25 tons of organic waste diverted per household per year times \$59 per ton for tipping and hauling fees in Cheverly times 10 years. With about 400 bins in the backyards of Cheverly households, this equates to \$59,000 dollars in savings over ten years minus \$4,000 in expenditures. Also, Cheverly calculates they are diverting 100 tons of compostable material a year and reducing the amount of methane gas being released from landfills by 20 tons.

◀ A local newspaper did a story on Doug Alexander and the program in Cheverly.
Source: Doug Alexander

Marketing and Outreach

Cheverly has advertised the discounted bins through a newsletter on local matters, which is sent out to residents each month, and through a Google listserv called the Cheverly Exchange, which is sent out to about 900 residents.

Training and Education

There are two educational webinar/videos — one for municipalities, one for residents at backyardcomposting.org

Tips for Replication

- Determine who will be responsible for implementation. The municipality, a Green Team, a nonprofit, a community group, or even an individual can take responsibility for implementing the Backyard Composting program.
- Keep a spreadsheet database of resident orders.
- Ask for donation/grants from local businesses, nonprofits, and individuals to increase available funding.

Contact and Grant Information

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Links

www.backyardcomposting.org