

▲ 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:

 $Free Garden^{TM}$  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.



# Cheverly, Maryland

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.



## Turning trash into treasure

running training treasure		
Resident leads effort to raise	April 2011, he has applied for and re-	might be able to give him more fund
single-family home composting	ceived \$4,700 in grants from sources such as the town of Cheverly — which gave him \$3,250 — and the Cheva-	ing, said David Warrington, Cheverly' town administrator. The rown cur week ours \$115,000 annually to durin
BY NATHUR MCGILL SUPERWITTER	peake Bay Trust, an environmental mospeolis. Alexander used the money to buy	in the county landfill. Warrington said Alexander come up with his say inecolorium haved soon a U.S. Fin
Doug Alexander of Cheverly is on a	\$40 bios from a Canada-based manu-	vironmental Proection Agency
mission to make sure his neighbors	factures, Horizon Plastics; he charges	statistic stating that the average U.S.
think twice before tossing another egg	residents \$20 per hip, which goes back	household wastes 474 pounds of food
shell into a trash hin	into purchasing additional bins.	and decomposable paper appeally.
He wants them to consider a new	Alexander said he has sold appear-	That figure, multiplied by Chev-
home for the waste - a compost bin.	imately 270 bins to single-family	erb's 1,600 homes, equals 758,400
What some consider rubbish, Alexan-	households in Cheveds, which has	pounds, or 379 toes, of waste annually
deruses for composting, the process of	1,600 such households.	he said. The county landfill tipping fee
turning decomposing produce and	'They're much more likely to use	of \$59 per ton multiplied by 379 ton
yard waste into soil for gardening.	the bin if they paid something for it,"	equals \$22,361 in savings, which is
His goal is to get 25 percent of	said Alexander, who took composting	about \$14 per bousehold. A total of 400
Cheverly's single-family home owners	classes through the Master Gardeners	bins, multiplied by the \$14 savings to
in on the act by providing residents	of Maryland. They usually run as	each home and a 20-year bin life spar
with discounted composting bins.	much as \$100 (from a retailer)."	equals \$112,000, he said.
"I just believe in not wasting mate- rials," said Alexander, who has ones	If grant money continues to be available the next two years. Alexander	Cheverly resident Jennilee Miller who bought a bin in the spring of 2011
	said be anticipates that 400 of the	from Alexander, said composting you
posted for 20 years. 'As much as possible, things should be recycled or	said he anticipates that 400 of the town's 1,600 single family homes will	a "no-brainer" for her after learning
composted, and I just had to figure out	have compost bins by 2014, saving the	how she could use it for her garden and
a way to make this work. I could see	town \$117,000 from dumping in the	reduce the trash in her home.
how this could work if we could get	county landfill over 20 years, which is	"I would say that it's easier than we
Ibinel at a low enough cost."	the life span of a bin.	thought it would be." Miller said.
Eliminating the price burrier to	Because the town already has	
ewning a bin is Alexander's goal. Since		

A local newspaper did a story on Doug Alexander and the program 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 listserve 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