

# Get DIRTY

this Valentine's Day!

## WANT TO GIVE YOUR LOVED ONE SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR VALENTINE'S DAY?

Give them a free backyard composter from Green Works Orlando!

When you sign up, you will also receive a Valentine e-card.

Composters will be delivered during Spring 2015.

## Orlando, Florida



### POPULATION:

277,173

### PROGRAM START DATE:

February 2015

### BIN TYPE AND PRICE:

Earth Machine™ from ORBIS Corporation – Free to residents (City retains ownership)

### BINS DISTRIBUTED:

5,340 as of December 2017

### TRAINING AND EDUCATION:

Training available but not required to obtain bin

## Program Summary

The City of Orlando's Solid Waste Division launched a backyard composting program as part of Mayor Buddy Dyer's Green Works Orlando initiative. Residents living within Orlando city limits can register on the City's website to obtain a free Earth Machine™. The City's Solid Waste Division then schedules a time to deliver the bin directly to the requesting household.<sup>37</sup> The City's garbage cart delivery staff adds compost bin deliveries to their routes. Alternatively, residents can pick up a bin at home composting workshops. The City opted to use the Earth Machine™ because the manufacturer offers discounts for large-scale purchases. The Earth Machine™ also met several standards set by the program: they were built to the right dimensions for successful composting, they were more durable than some other prefabricated composters (such as tumblers), they were easy to assemble, and they had a 10-year warranty.

The City of Orlando technically maintains ownership of compost bins they distribute to its residents. This gives the City the right to inspect compost bin placement and use, and residents must consent to this stipulation. The bins feature a "Green Works Orlando, Mayor Dyer's Green Initiative" sticker to brand the initiative. Thus far, the City has only had to inspect one bin. A neighbor of a household using a City bin called to make an odor complaint. The home composting program manager scheduled a meeting with the resident to inspect the composter and found that the gentleman was not putting enough dry material into the Earth Machine™. This quick and simple troubleshoot fixed the problem, and there have been no follow-up complaints.

<sup>37</sup> "Composting," *City of Orlando Public Works - Solid Waste*, accessed April 14, 2018, <http://www.cityoforlando.net/solidwaste/composter/>.



▲ Orlando's home composting website features this banner of an Earth Machine™ home composting bin with the Green Works Orlando logo. Source: City of Orlando

## Budget

The program has no set annual budget. The City provides bins to all residents who request them and orders the bins based on demand.

## Staffing

Ian Jurgensen, an employee for the City of Orlando Solid Waste Division, manages the composting program as part of his role as the Sustainability Project Manager for Green Works Orlando. He coordinates with the Solid Waste Division on purchasing, logistics, and marketing. Other aspects of the program are divided up and added to the tasks of appropriate City staff. Bin delivery is managed by the garbage cart delivery staff, and advertisement development is assigned to the Office of Communications and Neighborhood Relations.

## Partners

The University of Florida Orange County Extension Office teaches home composting workshops.

## Impact and Benefits/Costs

As of December 2017, Orlando had delivered 5,340 bins. Nearly 3,000 of these were delivered in the first few months of the program. Demand for the free bins has slowed since the initial marketing and outreach push, but the program's organizers expect renewed interest with future promotion.

Although Orlando has not measured the amount of materials diverted by program bins, the City has noticed that yard waste trucks have reduced their tipping weights

since the program's start. The program organizers used the EPA's figures for average weight of food waste discarded per household to calculate that the program should pay for itself in about four years through reduced waste hauling and tipping fees. Jurgensen notes that this calculation does not include yard trimmings diverted via home composting, meaning that the program would actually pay for itself in less than four years.

The cost of each composter depends on how many the City orders per delivery: between \$33-37 per unit. Advertising and marketing are all done using existing City staff and social media/print media outlets, so there are no additional marketing costs. Costs to deliver bins to residents are marginal because the composters are delivered by cart delivery drivers on their normal delivery routes.



▲ One of the two Valentine Day cards that residents could use to gift an Earth Machine™ bin to a loved one as part of the "Get Dirty" campaign. Source: City of Orlando

## Marketing and Outreach

The City of Orlando's Office of Communications and Neighborhood Relations led the home composting program's marketing campaign. The Office's Graphics team, Multimedia team, and other collaborating divisions designed a "Get Dirty!" campaign to launch the program. The campaign started in February 2015 with the "Get Dirty With Your Valentine" video (see Appendix A). The City posted the videos on its Facebook and Twitter accounts. Links in the posts sent people to the home composting web page. After filling out the bin request form, residents could download one of two Valentine's Day card PDFs to "gift" the compost bin (see Appendix

A). The Facebook post was viewed 3,432 times, reached 10,664 people, and was shared 55 times in the first two weeks. The Twitter post reached 1,850 people. In addition, a local television station ran the video every hour during the first weekend after the program was launched, and the local newspaper, the Orlando Sentinel, ran a feature story on the front page twice in two weeks (see Appendix A).<sup>38</sup> Orlando expanded the campaign in summer 2015 with the “Get Dirty With Your Neighbor” video (see Resources - Videos).

Orlando also advertises the bins and workshops through social media posts and flyers distributed at neighborhood meetings.<sup>39</sup>



▲ During summer 2016, the City of Orlando pushed for residents to “Get Dirty with their Neighbors” through a social media campaign and television advertisements. Source: JenHiatt.com

The City incurs no extra costs to produce the program’s marketing material. The Communications staff adds the work to their normal tasks, and they use existing advertisement space in a local newspaper and local television station. The actors in the Get Dirty videos were City staff.

## Training and Education

Backyard compost training workshops are organized by Jurgensen and taught by a representative from the University of Florida Orange County Extension Office. Jurgensen sets up the location, seating, and materials, and the representative brings a laptop and projector. As

of December 2017, Orlando had held 12 workshops with a total of 161 people attending.

The City also provides a variety of composting educational materials for residents to access. The program bins come with printed instructions specific to the Earth Machine™ and Orlando; instructions are in the *Backyard Composting Handbook* designed and produced by the City (see Appendix B). The City’s backyard composting web page has links to composting information and three short how-to videos that cover compost “prep,” “maintenance,” and “harvesting.”<sup>40</sup>



▲ First page of the guide book sent out to residents with their free Earth Machine™. Source: City of Orlando Department of Public Works

## Tips for Replication

- Education, such as composting workshops, is key.
- Learn as you go. Do not be afraid to adapt your program to the circumstances as they reveal themselves.
- Have initial buy-in from those who will be necessary in implementing the program.
- Communicate well within and between the departments that will implement the program.
- Think through how you are going to deal with complaints. This is especially important for jurisdictions that do not have an ordinance that outlines how to address odor complaints.

<sup>38</sup> Jen Hiatt, “Get Dirty’ Composting Social Media Campaign,” August 10, 2015, <http://jenhiatt.com/index.php/portfolio-item/get-dirty-composting-campaign/>.

<sup>39</sup> Orlando advertised on the social media platform *Next Door*. <https://nextdoor.com/agency-post/fl/orlando/city-of-orlando-office-of-communications-neighborhood-relations/get-dirty-composting-workshop-and-giveaway-tomorrow-night-22673654/>.

<sup>40</sup> All educational materials can be found at <http://www.cityoforlando.net/solidwaste/composter/>



▲ Orlando's backyard program is part of Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer's (pictured on right) Green Works initiative. Source: City of Orlando

## Contact

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## Links

### City of Orlando's Composting Web Page

<http://www.cityoforlando.net/composter>

### Get Dirty Campaign Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5SqNGCMVpc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ChzRfxPhol>

### Newspaper Stories

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/environment/os-orlando-compost-bins-how-to-20150316-story.html>

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/breaking-news/os-orlando-compost-valentine-20150210-story.html>