

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

- Volunteer Profiles: 2
- Clarice Coleman 2
- Mel Belizerian 2
- Lisa Sisson 3
- Year in Review 3
- Volunteer Form 4

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Master Composter & Recycler Program Celebrates Its 1st Year!

Written by: Caroline Brown (Class of Spring 06*)

URI's Master Composter & Recycler Program is celebrating its first birthday this fall! Sponsored by the University of Rhode Island (URI) Cooperative Education Extension Center (CEEC) and the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center (RIRRC), our program has achieved a lot in a year, and we have big plans for year two. In our inaugural newsletter issue, we thought we'd remind you where we've been and share where we're going.

Training is the Program Cornerstone

In our first year, we conducted two training sessions. In total, forty-eight people learned about the benefits of composting and recycling, the science and history of composting, and innovative and large-scale composting operations.

Attendees also received hands-on instruction on how to build, start, maintain, and troubleshoot hot and cold compost bins and piles. And the course concluded with information and brainstorming sessions about volunteer opportunities.

Twenty-five Rhode Islanders took the fall 2005 course, which met at URI's East Farm. Participants also attended two Saturday field trips: a behind-the-scenes look at Rhode Island's Central Landfill and Municipal Recycling Facility in Johnston, and a hands-on session at East Farm, where they learned how to create and maintain a pile, screen and lay out finished compost, and build a wire-mesh compost bin. The spring 2006 class was at-

tended by 23 participants. To encourage attendance from across the state, it was held at the Warwick Public Library. Class members were treated to three field trips, including a visit to the landfill, a tour of Earth Care Farm — a commercial organic composting facility in Charlestown—and an urban composting demonstration at Southside Community Land Trust (SSCLT) in Providence.



Rich Pederson of SSCLT City Farm giving a composting demonstration.

A Year of Outreach

In our first year, we worked hard to make sure that composting was featured at URI CEEC and Master Gardener events, such as Green-share Field Day and East Farm Spring Festival. For example, Master Composter/Recycler volunteers staffed booths and presented story boards to participants in the Master Gardener Spring Seminar and the East Farm Spring Festival.

In addition, we've formed a number of beneficial partnerships with local organizations to promote waste reduction and educate others about composting and recycling. Notable partners include Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living, Southside Community Land Trust, URI Master Gardeners and Earth Care Farm.

In November 2005, RIRRC and the URI CEEC partnered with Bryant University to produce a web-cast on backyard composting. The web-cast consisted of ten three-minute segments that provide useful information for both beginning and advanced composters. The web-cast is now active and will soon be accessible via the URI CEEC site, which is currently under construction.

Volunteer Service with a Smile

No one has yet completed the 30 hours of service to earn the official title Master Composter & Recycler, but many of you are working hard at it! And the number of volunteer opportunities is continuing to grow.

In the last year, you staffed information booths at events like the East Farm Spring Festival, Smithfield Tree Festival and the Sustainable Living Festival. You organized local community programs, assisted with demonstrations and workshops, and took on a number of direct service opportunities offered through RIRRC and the URI Master Gardeners program.

Examples include the Community Workshop on Composting Spring Yard Debris, the Northeast Regional Master Gardener Conference, and the Workshop on Advanced Composting Topics at URI East Farm.

Continued on page 3

Reinhard Sidor (Fall 05' class) conducting a community workshop on composting the backyard of his Warwick, RI residence.



Master Composters & Recyclers in the Making!

Written by : Caroline Brown

CLARICE COLEMAN

Fall 2005 Class



Clarice Coleman stands by her compost bin in her backyard in Narragansett.

Clarice Coleman likes hands-on volunteer work, and she does a lot of it for the Master Composter program. She participated in an educational program at URI for children in the Head Start program, helped build compost bins at URI's Garcia Greenhouse, sold compost bins at the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC), and participated in her local computer recycling program.

Clarice enjoyed working with the Head Start children at an educational recycling program that was held at URI's Memorial Union. "We taught kids how to use recycling bins by playing a game that showed them what goes in each bin," she explains.

"It was good to see that some children already knew how to use the bins because they did it at home."

She also enjoys working at public events. "I'm always encouraged by the positive response that people have to composting and recycling," says Clarice. "For example, at the computer recycling program, people were lined up in the parking lot even though it rained steadily all day."

"The same thing happened when I helped sell composting bins at RIRRC," she continues. "Even though it was raining, we sold 100 bins in the first hour."

Clarice took the Master Composting class to perfect her composting techniques. She says that she used to compost

in a pile that she kept on an empty lot she owned that was across the street from her house. But when she gave the lot to her daughter and had to move the pile, she decided to get a bin and learn more about how the composting process works. "Before, I never did anything to the heap except add to it, and it took a couple of years to get compost," she explains. "Using the bin allows me to get 'black gold' much faster."

A resident of Narragansett, Clarice is the secretary for Rhode Island's State 4-H program and for the Landscape Architecture Department at URI. She is also a Master Gardener, class of 2004, who has accumulated more than 500 hours of volunteer service.

*"I'm always encouraged by the positive response that people have to composting & recycling...At the computer recycling program, people were lined up in the parking lot even though it rained steadily all day."
- Clarice Coleman*

MEL BILEZERIAN

Fall 2005 Class

Mel Bilezerian has jumped into a couple of high-profile composting projects since completing the URI Master Composter course. He coordinated a composting float for the Bristol Fourth of July Parade that was supported by the Shaw's Supermarkets, Trex Decking, and the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC), and is managing the development of a courtyard garden that will feature composting and theme gardens at Emma G. Whiteknact School in East Providence.

Featuring compost and recycling bins, fresh vegetable displays, compost, and mulch, the composting

float highlighted the role of composting and recycling in reducing the amount of waste sent to the landfill. "The float showed that compost is a valuable resource for gardeners and that using it results in natural plants and vegetables," says Mel.

Mel coordinated the construction of the float, working with Shaw's Trex, and RIRRC. He and other participants were rewarded for their efforts when the float was judged "most original" by the parade float committee.

At Whiteknact School, Mel is managing the efforts of a number of volunteers from the URI Master Gardeners and and Master Composters programs, the URI Department of Landscape Architecture, and RIRRC, which funded the garden. The garden features a composting demonstration facility and other earth-

friendly gardening techniques, such as rain barrels and semi-permeable pavers that allow water infiltration.

The garden at Whiteknact School is a pilot program and will be used as a model for other schools in the state. The themed gardens have been designed to incorporate lessons from the school's K-5 curriculum. "It's important to teach kids these concepts at an early age," Mel explains. "Within the school curriculum, children will learn about horticulture, recycling, and composting."

Mel is also a URI Master Gardener. "I try to tie the two programs together in my volunteer activities," says Mel. "Without good soil you won't get good fruits and vegetables."

When he's not composting and gardening, he's an electrical engineer who lives in North Smithfield.



Mel Bilezerian (far left) and others proudly display their "Most Original" award.

Master Composter & Recycler Update Continued

LISA SISSON

Fall 2005 Class

Lisa Sisson loves trash. Well, make that recycling. Since participating in the Fall 2005 Master Composter & Recycler program, she has gained a strong appreciation for the recycling and composting programs at Rhode Island Resource Recovery Center. "I would do just about any volunteer activity for the RIRRC," says the South Kingston resident.

Lisa says that the highlight of the Master Composter & Recycler class was the tour of the Johnston landfill. "I had no idea what to expect, and the magnitude of the pile of trash was unbelievable," she explains. "It completely changed the way I look at trash."

"Now, when I need to dispose of something, I consider whether it can be recycled, composted, or thrown away," she continues. "And I'm so embarrassed if I buy something with extra packaging."

An education coordinator at Cornerstone School in Cranston, Lisa was interested in starting a recycling program at school. She worked with the RIRRC to complete a waste audit of the school, and helped convince her managers that it was a good idea. Eventually she hopes to add a composting component to the program that can be adapted to the school's curriculum. In addition, Lisa started her own compost pile and has educated many of her family and friends about how to start and maintain their own pile.

"It shows that once the light bulb goes off, people begin to think about their waste and where it goes." - Lisa Sisson

Her newfound appreciation for the RIRRC led Lisa to participate in several of their computer collections. "It's neat to see that so many people are interested in coming in and dropping off their

computers and cell phones for recycling," she says. "It shows that once the light bulb goes off, people begin to think about their waste and where it goes."



Lisa Sisson with Max Man at URI Jumpstart for a Day.

In addition to her volunteer efforts in computer collections, Lisa volunteered at the Children's Tent at the East Farm Spring Festival and at an educational recycling program that URI held for Head Start children. "Working with children is great, especially when you can get them involved in topics like composting and recycling," she says.

"Year In Review" Continued from Page 1

Ongoing activities include the planning and development of a garden with a composting area at the Whiteknact Elementary School in East Providence, maintaining the East Farm compost area, and multiple service opportunities at RIRRC.

What's New for Year Two?

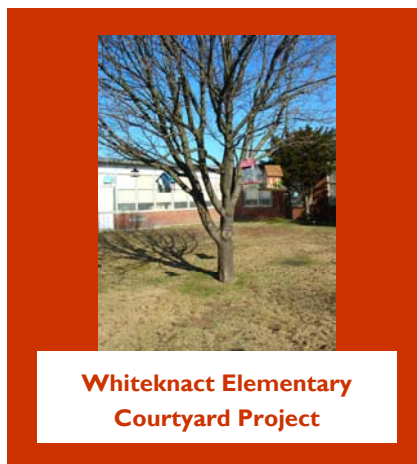
The biggest news is that we're adding a summer training to our fall and spring offerings. The courses will again be offered at different locations throughout the state to encourage a diverse group of attendees.

We're hoping to attract 25-30 attendees to each class to reach our goal of training between 75-100 Rhode Islanders each year. We're constantly revising our course plan to include diverse speakers, formative field trips, hands-on activities and group participation.

URI CEEC is working on Master Composter & Recycler program webpage,

which will provide the public and volunteers with more information about the program, upcoming volunteer opportunities, and future events.

This year, we're planning to give our worms a workout! We'll continue to feature worm composting in our Learning Landscape Environmental Education Program, and we'll be taking some of these modules--including the worms--to elementary schools for demonstrations.



Whiteknact Elementary Courtyard Project

Volunteers are the Key

Our first year was important because we developed an active volunteer base—that's you! As this base expands, we can develop more outreach opportunities across the state.

Moving forward, we'll be working to determine the most effective ways to manage and sustain a growing volunteer base. And we'll continue to look for ways to bring more Rhode Islanders into the fold and help them become composting and recycling experts.

Thanks for participating in the first year of the URI Master Composter & Recycler program. If you have any suggestions for our second year, please let us know. And don't forget to turn in your volunteer hours to Tara Germond, using the form that's provided on page four of this newsletter. Who knows, maybe you'll be the first person to achieve the official title of URI Master Composter & Recycler!

**The Rhode Island
Composter & Recycler Newsletter**

3 East Alumni Ave
Kingston, RI 02881

Phone: 401-874-4453

Fax: 401-874-2259

E-mail: Tara@uri.edu

Postage Here

Mailing Label Here



Sponsored by:
~RI Resource Recovery Corporation
~The University of Rhode Island
Cooperative Extension Education
Center

URI/RIRRC Master Composter Volunteer Hour Tracking Form

Return this page by mail, email, or fax to Tara Germond, CEEC, 3 East Alumni Avenue, Kingston, RI 02881; email: Tara@uri.edu; or fax 401-874-2259.

Month: _____ Full Name: _____ Email: _____

Please indicate the type of volunteer activity: **Educational, Direct Service, or Activism** and the total number of hours volunteered on that project during the month(s).

Activity Type:	
Activity Description: <i>Please give brief 1-2 Sentence description of volunteer experience</i>	
Activity Date:	
Town Activity Completed In:	
How many people were involved:	
Length of Activity	
Total Hours Volunteered:	