

City of Los Angeles

Green Material and Manure Compost Demonstration Project

Introduction

The City of Los Angeles has operated a compost demonstration facility at Griffith Park since 1996, and is in the process of identifying sites for a larger, permanent facility. In the interim, there is no plan to shut down the demonstration facility. The program has been successful in diverting green material and zoo manure from disposal, and in developing markets for recycled-content compost products with a private sector partner.

Program Summary

The City of Los Angeles diverts approximately 835 cubic yards (cy) of organic material per month through the Griffith Park composting facility. Tree and landscape trimmings and zoo manure are collected at the park for composting. In addition, a small amount of biosolids (less than 0.5 percent of what is generated from the city's wastewater treatment facility) is also used as a compost feedstock.

Griffith Park does not use the "windrow" composting method. Instead, they use aerated static piles of the mixed zoo manure, ground green materials, and biosolids that are placed on asphalt pads during the composting process. Air ventilators are built into the pads and pull air through the piles and then through biofilters. This process aerates the material and helps to reduce odors and hasten the decomposition process. The material is processed to meet the CIWMB's regulatory time/temperature requirements of 15 days and 131 degrees F, and is kept on site past that to allow for additional curing.

The finished compost product is divided up between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Bureau of Sanitation. Parks and Recreation uses the compost on parklands to improve the quality of their landscaping. The Bureau of Sanitation sells some to private vendors, or donates it to nonprofit organizations and schools for gardening or community improvement projects.

The city also operates an educational facility at the Griffith Park composting facility to educate the public on how to compost their yard trimmings. Those attending the training can also purchase a backyard-composting bin. The city saves a significant amount of money by composting at Griffith Park rather than having these organic materials hauled to another county to be composted.

Diversion Amounts

In the year 2001, the City of Los Angeles diverted a total of 15,500 cy of organic materials. Specifically, the city diverted 11,220 cy of yard trimmings; 2,266 cy of zoo manure, and 2,010 tons of biosolids. In addition, the city distributed 6,699 cubic yards of final product through a private vendor under the label TOPGRO.

Key Benefits

The city has realized the following benefits from the compost demonstration project:

- Helped the city achieve a greater than 50 percent diversion rate.
- Saved \$38 per ton from the cost of hauling organic materials to a landfill.
- Avoided collection and disposal costs of \$172,824 annually.

In addition, the project has demonstrated that an aerated static pile process could meet all regulatory requirements within a city of 4 million people without a single nuisance complaint.

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