

Willow Tree Community Compost

Jen Murphy VORS 2020



Why Willow Tree?











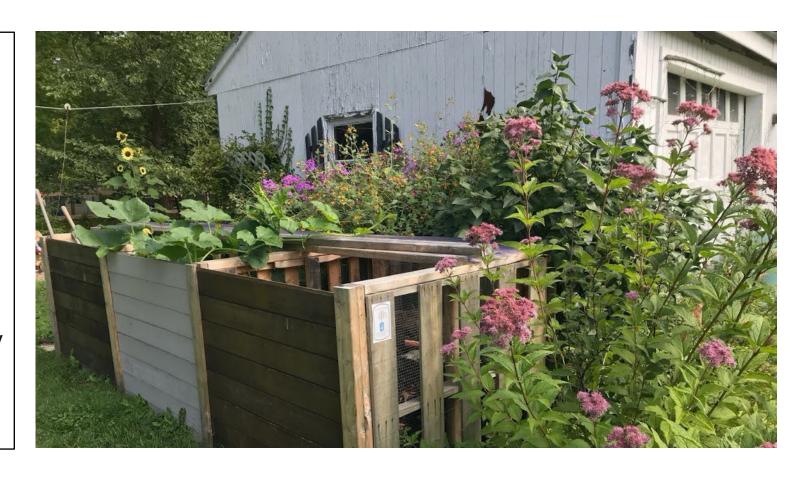
WILLOW TREE COMPOST

What is Willow Tree?

 A small, local curbside compost pick-up company serving Hartford, VT

Goals:

- simple and accessible
- build community
- keep nutrients in the community



Getting Started





Brainstorming/Planning

- Decided on name and logo
- Attended Grow More/Waste Less Workshop with Cat Buxton
- SCORE mentor

Housekeeping

- Email/website
- Business bank account
- Registered Tradename
- VT State Hauling permit
- Town of Hartford Business permit
- Liability Insurance

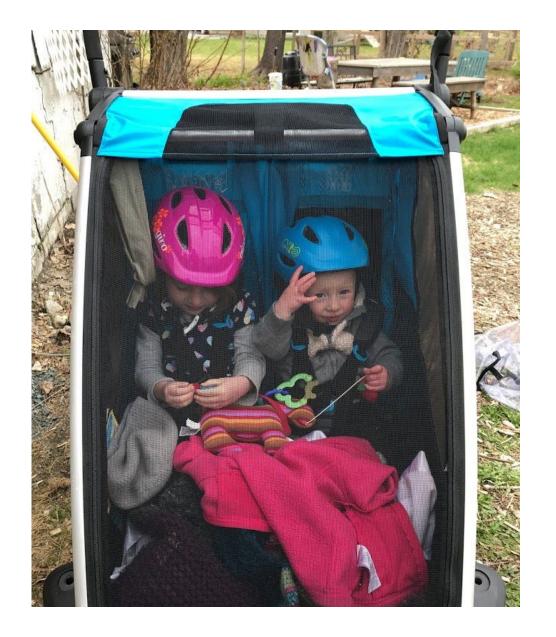




PILOT PROGRAM: Finding Participants







Getting Ready for Pilot Program:

Built a 3-bin system











Getting Ready for Pilot Program:









Getting Ready for Pilot Program:

Purchased Buckets/Stickers









Pilot Program Summary

- 10 Participants
- Two months
 (May and June 2019)
- Weekly Pick-up
- Experimented with
 - liners vs. no liners
 - pick-up scheduling
 - collection system



14 months Later...



Services

- 5 gallon bucket curbside pickup
 - Weekly
 - Bi-weekly
- Drop-off
 - Dump your own
 - Bucket swap
- 32 gallon bin weekly pickup

Current Customers stats

- 80 Customers
 - 19 Weekly
 - 39 Biweekly
 - 19 Drop Off
 - 5 32 gallon shared bins
 - 64 residential
 - 3 commercial
 - 3 offices
 - 115 condo/apartment households



FOOD SCRAPS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL

(since May 2019)

17,590 lbs currently ~1000lbs/week

Partnership with Sunrise Farm





Marketing

- Word of mouth
- Every Door Direct Mailing
- Hanging Flyers
- Social Media







CrowdFunding

- Participated in The Local Crowd crowdfunding campaign through Vital Communities (Nov-Dec 2019)
- Raised \$4,080 to help grow the business
- Gained customers through exposure during the campaign
- Partner Sunrise Farm also ran a campaign to raise money for their on-farm composting facility





Sunrise Farm Partnership



- Located on Route 5 in Hartford, VT
- 350 Member Community Supported Ag (CSA)
- Vegetables, meat (chicken and sheep), eggs and maple syrup
- Owned by Chuck Wooster since 1999





On-Farm Composting



Funding

- State grant from Working Lands Board
- Crowdfunding Campaign

<u>Structure</u>

- Post and beam structure with Solar panels on roof
- 3 large compartments on a poured concrete slab
 - 1. Drop off/mixing
 - 2. Active aeration
 - 3. Secondary cure

Consultants

- James McSweeney (Compost Technical Services)
- Cat Buxton

(Grow More/Waste Less)

<u>Specs</u>

- Medium Compost Facility Permit
- ~130 cubic yards of food scraps per year

~200 Cubic yards of compost per year





White River Community Garden









The Perks

- Member benefits
 - Compost share back
 - Personal touch- email updates
 - Flexibility
- Supporting Community
 - Local Farm
 - Community Garden
 - Local businesses



Challenges











Contamination Animals Carbon Sourcing Winter

Future of Willow Tree





- Increase food scrap capacity
- Offer educational opportunities
- Create composting network
- Other service
 - Compost tea
 - Vermicompost



