

The Rocket® composter at Fort Lewis College

Closing the recycling loop on site!

Fort Lewis College's main goals were to divert their food scraps stream from landfill, educate the student body on the value of composting and create a rich source of compost for its campus garden.

This partnership between Sodexo (food management company) and the Environmental Center at Fort Lewis College started on Jan 6 2012. The student body at Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO has learned to close the recycling loop onsite, the basics of composting; what can and cannot be composted, how compost is created in only 14 days using food scraps onsite, compost usage at the garden, as well as the more detailed side of composting; ideal food waste size, C:N mix ratio, moisture content, temperatures, maturation, different feedstock's and compost smell.

Fort Lewis College EC staff consists of two paid students who are responsible for managing the Rocket (compost output, storage and monitor temperatures from data logger) while Sodexo feeds the Rocket composter. Each students spends 3-4 hours per week, about 35 min per day. "Despite the high volume, composting with the Rocket requires very little upkeep."

A team of seven students work in the garden, who host classes and volunteer workdays where about 60 students interact with the garden each year. The garden produces up to 1,000 lbs. of food per year, which goes back to the dining hall, closing the recycling loop onsite! Sodexo buys the food from the campus garden which is a real life experience for the students. Every semester there are 5-6 tours of the Rocket composter and the campus garden where about 200 students get exposure and learn about organics management.

The Environmental Center is able to experiment with the compost created from their own community food scraps while using large volumes of compost within the campus garden and orchard. Students are able to see first-hand the positive impact of composting onsite and reducing their campus' CO2 footprint. They also see the value of local food sourcing and understand consequences of food waste disposal at a landfill.



Rocket A900 Rocket composter



Marty Pool - Coordinator of the Environmental Center

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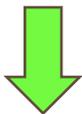
Compost



A900 Rocket composter



Food Scraps



Garden uses compost from the Rocket



Food from the garden back to the dining hall

