

Composting: Why is it important?

1. **It's the law.** State law AB1826 mandates businesses including schools and colleges to compost.
2. **Save green.** Currently composting is provided by Republic Services, the school's garbage service provider, at no extra cost, while trash is billed by both volume and tonnage. The more the campus recycles and composts, the less goes in the trash, the less need for costly garbage service, which could free up money used for other improvements to campus.
3. **Be green.**
 - a. "Save the landfill". Keller Canyon Landfill is located in Pittsburg. It was the last landfill built in California in 1992 and has as estimated 30 years left based on our present rate of sending material there. *Then what??* About 30% of what ends up in landfills is perfectly compostable organic material. As well, organic waste in landfills generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. By composting, methane emissions are significantly reduced. The Keller Canyon Landfill actually captures methane and converts it to energy, though reducing waste sent to the landfill is always important.
 - b. Finished compost has multiple benefits, including reducing the need for chemical fertilizer, promoting higher yields in agricultural crops, helping in restoration efforts, remediating soils contaminated by hazardous waste, capturing and destroying nearly all industrial volatile organic chemicals in contaminated air, enhancing water retention in soils and providing carbon sequestration.



Composting: How to do it?

Composting is available in the cafeteria. All food and food-soiled paper like napkins and paper plates are accepted. Plastic and other trash is not accepted in the compost. Empty any leftover food into the compost bins without the packaging.

Composting: Where does it go?

Republic Services sends a truck just for picking up compost. Once the truck is full, it is transferred to the Republic Services' compost facility located in Richmond. Following grinding and processing, the materials are hauled to the compost pile area and placed in piles on top of the perforated pipes, providing pile aeration. After the piles are constructed, they are covered with a minimum of six-inches of finished compost material. During positive aeration, the finished compost cover (i.e. biofilter) controls emissions and odors. The compost cover itself is moisture conditioned through the active composting phase as needed to maintain its effectiveness in controlling emissions and odors. Based on monitoring and operational protocol, the aeration system is activated to induce airflows through the piles. The aeration timing and flow rates are varied as needed to optimize the



composting process and minimize odors. Composting piles remain on the pad for approximately three to five weeks prior to moving to the curing area. Curing piles allow for the compost to further mature and increase in quality after pathogen reduction is complete in the active phase. The duration in curing allows for adequate time for the final stabilization of the compost to occur resulting in a consistent, high quality compost product being produced. The end-use of the compost will dictate the necessary degree of maturation of the material. Once desired maturation is reached, the curing piles will be screened into finished compost and residual material.

On a final note: It's good to encourage students to get in the habit of recycling while at DVC. As students are learning so much and building a better future for themselves, this is the perfect time to learn about how every decision can make a difference. If we can send our students off to a life where they have learned good recycling habits here...the world will be a better place.

Interested in getting involved? Consider joining the campus Sustainability Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, students and community partners. Generally meets the last Thursday of the month, 3 PM in the Administration Building. For more information, contact committee chair Sharrie Bettencourt, sbettencourt@dvc.edu. Or, join the student run Earth Club. For more information, email dvcearthclub@gmail.com.