

## Compost Learning Center (CLC) Status – May, 2025

### History:

In 2023, the Compost Committee worked with Mother Lode Land Trust (MLLT) to identify a site at the Community Garden where we could place the composting demonstration installations for the purpose of conducting classes in that area. This arrangement was developed in conjunction with Cal Recycle's acquisition of Grant Funds and as a start of providing individual residents with training on composting. This essentially is the why, how and what works best for county residents wishing to do their own composting. The site was originally located in front of the Prop House, by the fence.



The following year, in 2024, MLLT requested that we move the site to a position closer to where they were planning to install their Community Composting site. The challenge with this initial option was that it was right in the middle of the parking lot.

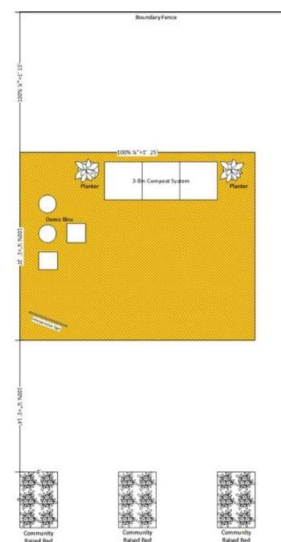
The Compost Committee discussed the goal of identifying, building, and maintaining a permanent space. This space would be an inviting outdoor classroom area where class participants and Master Gardeners would be united in the Community Garden effort.

### The process:

After several discussions and many suggestions, the Compost Committee and MLLT agreed that the Compost Learning Center would be permanently located behind the Prop House and just beyond the 5 raised beds and towards the fence. MLLT requested that we develop plans for the installation. These were submitted, and after several revisions a final decision was made (see below)!

During the installation, a few tweaks were made. Here is the final agreement with MLLT:

- The CLC area would be a 25' X 20' space in the general area all had agreed on.
- MGs would maintain that area and would be responsible for weed control within the framed, chipped area.
- MGs would also take responsibility for the 5 raised beds behind the Prop House, planting them with various pollinator plants, keeping everything weeded and trimmed around the wooden frames.
- MGs would keep the area around the fruit trees neat and work with John Wimer to arrive at a consistent irrigation installation for them.



**First steps:**

First step...we needed to grade and level the area we were going to put our CLC on. Scott Oneto brought his tractor over and did the heavy lifting for us. Additionally, he worked with Brad from MLLT to trench and install the water line that was needed.

John Wimer and Dawn Martella installed the framing, giving us a clearly defined space to do our work.



Cardboard was added to help reduce the weeds and spread the initial chips.

Dawn Martella, Doris & Bob Mosblech worked to harvest all the compost that had been created in the original installation and then move everything to the new site. The compost was put into the raised beds that MGs have responsibility for. Carly and her son stopped by and helped us move compost into the raised beds.



Dawn and Doris planted pollinator plants in the raised beds and John Wimer worked with Dawn to repair/install the irrigation for the raised beds.

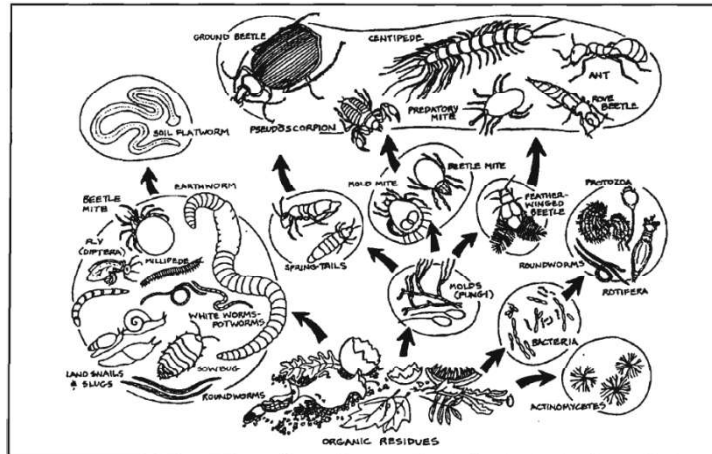
**Next Steps:**

Of course, there are great plans for finalizing this space. The current goal is to have it available for the big ribbon cutting ceremony with the Chamber of Commerce on June 3 and our Backyard Composting class on June 14. Hopefully by then the plants will grow nicely and beautify the space. Additional chips will be installed on 5/29. Each committee member will be taking care of the area as they add the contributions we receive from Jamba Juice to our "Dump and Cover" compost demonstration.

Stay tuned for future developments for our CLC site!

# Welcome to Our Compost Corner!

## Composting Hack Series #3 – Good Bugs Verses Bad Bugs in your Compost Pile HAVE YOU NOTICED...Strange “bugs” in your compost pile?



\*Image taken from Master Composter Resource Manual <https://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/>

There are both beneficial and harmful “bugs” to be aware of in a compost pile. Beneficial bugs play a crucial role in breaking down organic matter, aerating the pile, and enriching the compost with nutrients. These helpful insects include earthworms, red wiggler worms, springtails, beetles, and soldier fly larvae. Worms consume decomposing material and produce nutrient-rich castings. Springtails are tiny insects that assist in breaking down fungi and decaying plants. Other beneficial decomposers, such as rove beetles and soldier fly larvae, help speed up decomposition by consuming dead plant matter and food scraps. These “bugs” create a balanced ecosystem within the compost, ensuring efficient decomposition and preventing harmful bacteria from taking over.

On the other hand, harmful bugs in a compost pile can cause problems by spreading disease, attracting pests, or slowing down the decomposition process. Fruit flies and houseflies are common nuisances that thrive in exposed food waste and can become overwhelming if not managed properly. Ants may invade a compost pile if it becomes too dry, disrupting the balance of decomposition. Harmful beetles, such as root maggots, can also infest the pile and spread to garden plants once the compost is used. While they do not typically pose health risks, their presence can be bothersome. To maintain a healthy compost system, it is important to manage moisture levels, cover or bury food scraps with brown materials, and turn the pile often.

Check Out Our UCANR Web Site Composting Page to Learn More!



[https://ucanr.edu/sites/MG\\_of\\_CS/Resources/Composting\\_Resources/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/MG_of_CS/Resources/Composting_Resources/)

We will continue to add content as we produce more of our documents and videos.

#### PUBLIC OUTREACH EVENTS

1/27/25 - CalFresh Composting- Vermicomposting Train-the-Trainer

2/1/25 - Public Education Class: Vermicomposting



2/19/25 - Amador Farm to Table Event



4/2/2025 – Sutter Creek Woman’s Club Outreach (Vermicomposting)



4/23/2025 – Compost Committee Work Day, Casting Packaging

4/29/2025 – Lone 4-H Outreach (Vermicomposting)



5/15/25 – Public Health Train the Trainer



#### UPCOMING EVENTS

6/3/2025 – Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Party at the Compost Learning Center located in the Community Garden @ 12:30pm

6/11/25 – Farms of Amador Day Camp Outreach

6/14/2025 – Public Ed Class at the Community Garden “Backyard Composting” from 9am – 12pm