



Earth Matter NY Inc.
2024 Annual Report

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Earth Matter NY was founded in Spring 2009 to address the dual problems of resource recovery and healthy soils with a single solution: **promoting the local composting of organic waste into a fertile soil amendment.** We are passionate about resource recovery and healthy soil as primary goals of a 21st-century urban environment in NYC.



Compost and Farm Apprentices

Mission

We seek to reduce the organic waste misdirected into the garbage stream by encouraging neighbor participation and leadership in composting.

We see that there is one soil, one air, and one water, all commonly held and stewarded by one people, the nurturance of which is critical to a verdant world.

We see that organic waste should not be part of modern landfills because the waste of any process is food for other processes.

We see that transportation of waste far beyond the source unnecessarily despoils the soil, air, and water.

We see that society needs to alter the way waste is treated as part of an integrated, long term solution to food, climate, and energy issues.

We see that the power to manifest global social change lies within each of us.

The challenge to take action rests on our shoulders.

Notes from the Field

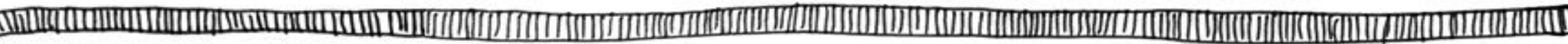
Dear Friends, we had a gap year in our annual reporting 2023.

November 2023 brought the shock of abrupt defunding of the NYC Compost Project as the Mayor announced a mid-year budget crisis. After taking stock of our organizational resources, Earth Matter decided to keep the fires burning, stoking the NYC community composting network that's been building for over a decade. The decision was based largely on the strength of support from the communities we serve. The voices of 50,000+ supporters and advocates who signed petitions, rallied at City Hall, and proclaimed that the work is anything but "tiny and inefficient", as described by City officials.

Supporters proclaimed the vision of community composting is an indispensable and critical element of the success of the NYC municipal composting program. Others outside the local ecosystem felt the same way; Mill Industries, Inc. provided substantial corporate philanthropy to tide some operations over. Primarily, we dipped into reserves from January through June, enabling processing of GrowNYC and LESEC food scrap drop-off collections, and continuing to serve the Island as their closed-loop partner for organics recycling.

"Here's what we added to our compost tumbler today - you can tell because you see broccoli bits."

-John Divney, Apprentice



"No amount of (municipal compost) infrastructure substitutes for the in person interactions that community composters provide New Yorkers."

-Council Member Shaun Abrue; Chair, Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

The City Council heeded the call of those who took civic action and restored funding on July 1, 2024, to a larger group of organizations now called the NYC Community Composting Network (NYCCCN). This validation of citizen action and ideals empowers the NYCCCN directly as we work to fulfill that vision.

With the entire Earth Matter team pulling together, we came out stronger in 2024! We owe an incredible thanks to dedicated staff, core volunteer managers, volunteers, our Board of Directors and, Advisory Members, who all rolled up their sleeves and "plugged holes", tiding us over till July 2024 when funding was restored.

The NYC Council funding provides continuity to operations and expansion of our educational offerings with new staff. For example, for school groups that have come for compost programming, we are offering on-site street tree care lessons, so students may steward trees near their campuses.

We have continued to develop diversified streams of funding. We are in a better place now thanks to existing and new partnerships. For example,

Field Notes (cont'd)

with The NY Climate Exchange grant, we've begun partnering with Pratt Center K-12, and deepening our relationship with the NYU Gallatin School.

Since 2010, Earth Matter has pursued the concept of zero waste on Governors Island (GI). The Zero Waste Island (ZWI) Initiative became a partnership with The Trust for Governors Island in 2019. Throughout, The Trust has provided the land for our Compost Learning Center and the opportunity to amplify the zero waste vision to the entire GI community of nearly 1,000,000 visitors each year under an Memorandum of Understanding with the Dept. of Sanitation NY.

It is a joy to announce that in late 2024, The Trust awarded Earth Matter a compost processing and education contract. We will now formalize our services as The Trust's ZWI partner. Our Compost Learning Center will remain on the Island, and relocate in 2025, just a little ways away from where we are located now.

Thank you all for being a part of our journey.

Thank you all for celebrating this year- our sweet 16th!

And, most of all,
Thank you all for nurturing our soils through recycling your organic resources.

We know we're better together.



Marisa DeDominicis
Executive Director

Earth Matter Staff

Back Row

Tiffany Yu
Sakina Shahid
Jessica Wang
Elena D'Amanda
Sandra Watanabe
Andrea Lieske
Samantha Normandia

Front Row

David Klein
Marisa DeDominicis
Charlie Bayrer
Bryen Pittner



2024 Impact

How we got our hands dirty

- 9,927** total participants
- 251** group work days
- 26** group tours
- 11** workshops
- 66** trainees ready
- 365** days of animal care
- 1,011,709** lbs. of organics composted



Finances

How we've grown our feedstocks



In FY 2023 we had a \$780,000 budget



In FY 2024 we had a \$1,000,000 budget



In FY 2025 (we're more than half way through), we project our budget will be \$1,500,000

**FY=Fiscal Year*

We hosted and received donations from more group work days than ever!

- 130 groups in 2023
- 251 groups in 2024

Wow we raised \$474,000 of grants in 2024, that's 4x more than 2023!



Programs

at the **Compost Learning Center**

Zero Waste Island Initiative envisions a model of resource management that reduces, reuses, and recycles the earth's resources, sending as little as possible to landfills and incinerators. Earth Matter NY partners with The Trust for Governors Island to process all organic materials generated by visitors, vendors, tenants, and events right on Governors Island. We see elements of this initiative as transferable to schools, homes, workplaces, and communities near and far.

NYC Community Compost Network operates our processing facility, where we mix landscape materials, food scraps, and compostable service ware collected on Governors Island with residential food scraps and browns dropped off by our network to produce a fertile soil amendment rich in biodiversity. Education is woven into all elements including public open hours, volunteer days, events, and training.

Soil Start Farm is an experimental hub for on-farm composting where gardeners and composters learn the importance of nutrient cycling in maintaining soil health and fertility. Gardeners use readily-available materials from the farm, creating quality compost to grow new vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

The NYC Lavender Field is Earth Matter's healing space for the community, pollinators, and the earth. This immersive oasis provides visitors with a serene, deliciously fragrant place to set aside the stresses of city life. The Lavender Field is our field station for volunteers to learn and utilize horticultural best practices in maintaining hundreds of woody perennial plants, and pause, as the field is open always.



Join Us

Whether it's volunteering for a Zero-Waste event, caring for the chickens, learning to make compost, growing food on the farm, or nurturing lavender plants, there are many points of entry. School groups, community gardeners, teen and adult trainees, volunteers, and visitors all depend on Earth Matter for hands-on, learn-by-doing experiences that help them feel part of the solution.

How can I get involved? Visit our website: www.earthmatter.org and sign up!



Zero Waste Island Initiative

We've joined forces with The Trust for Governors Island to create Zero Waste Island (ZWI), an initiative with the goal of reducing the Island's waste export to zero.

100% of the organic waste collected is processed at our Compost Learning Center, creating fertile compost used across the Island and other NYC public open spaces. This includes landscaping materials, as well as food scraps and serviceware from vendor, tenant, and public recycling stations, and events.

18 Island events supported

14 ZWI Interns

4 CUNY Interns

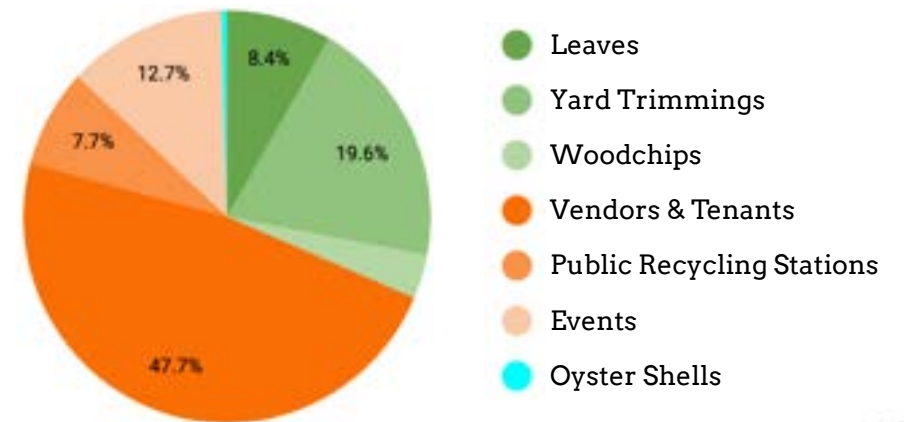
9 Youth Interns (shared with Farm)

ZWI is also revising the single-use serviceware stream by studying a Reuse system on the Island, thanks to support from NYSP2I (New York State Pollution Prevention Institute) and in partnership with our Advisor, Samantha MacBride.

Our aspiration is to send zero resources generated on Governors Island to the landfill.



261,541 lbs. of Island organics composted



All vendors use compostable serviceware

"I think there's a new urgency and new understanding that the systems we have been using and relying upon for climate, and waste management are really not serving us. In that context, there's a lot of excitement about this (Reuse) project...and community composting and composting at variety of scales are coming to the forefront."
Samantha MacBride, Earth Matter Advisor



NYC Community Compost Network

As a compost education and processing facility, with strong support from the NYC Council, we have been able to continue our work with other organizations as part of the NYC Community Compost Network (NYCCCN).

Processing: Our facility processed a total of 505.8 tons of organics in 2024 from Governors Island and citywide. 120 tons were collected citywide by partner organizations including GrowNYC, LES Ecology Center, and Big Reuse. Smaller community partners generated 36 tons.

Distribution: 200 cubic yards of finished compost was distributed to Governors Island partners, NYC Parks' GreenThumb community gardens, and other NYC public open spaces.

Public Education: The Compost Learning Center hosted over 5,000 people during weekend open hours and tours. The community scale compost processing provides the backdrop for all of Earth Matter's training programs.

Partnerships: We collaborated with community compost organizations, schools, and partners citywide to deepen our reach off-Island.

Technical support: Ongoing practical support for compost systems citywide has been augmented by expanding street tree stewardship and workshops.

This year's NYCCCN highlights:

1,011,709 lbs. / 505.8 tons of organics composted

200 cubic yards of compost distributed

13 community compost org partnerships





Soil Start Farm

We hosted a kaleidoscope of people - trainees, Heritage Bed Farmers, New York Cares volunteers, Hamilton Madison House seniors, and a smorgasbord of groups, representing many sizes, inclinations, and ages who supported life on our Farm. Produce was donated to The Catholic Worker soup kitchen.

20 NYC Parks GreenThumb Apprentices: We work with these devoted community compost leaders who seek ways to more efficiently compost their gardens' plant materials and neighborhood's food scraps.

12 Seed to Seed Apprentices: This season-long program attracts adults who may be transitioning from another profession, "feeling their way" at school, or simply fostering a passion for our natural world. These committed souls came, week after week, growing food, flowers, and community, and understanding the multi-faceted fertility of healthy soils.

120 New York Harbor School (NYHS) students & Interns: We continue to host and lend a helping hand to their on-site composting, Future Farmers of America school garden, classroom curricula, afterschool club, and internships. We are deeply grateful for the powerful student testimonies advocating for Community Composting funding at NYC Council hearings last spring.



9 Youth Interns: Our summer internship provides hands-on skill building experience; we felt boundless joy seeing youth from all over NYC dig in to help make healthy soil and healthy communities.

Together, with help from the birds, the bees, and the microbes, our Farm and composting systems flourished. We joyfully shared our Farm with all who found their way (to our) home.

"I love Governors Island! I learned how to make the compost mix that is used for planting seeds and I learned how to plant seeds. It is an experience that I will always remember."
Juanita, Hamilton Madison House Volunteer





Volunteer managers Sarah Lehrich and Hollis Hillhouse hosted helpers from New York Cares, work day groups, trainees, and Island guests. Together they sustained the Field as a place of peace and healing for the public and the earth.

Always open, guests strolled the lavender paths with vibrant fragrances and colors of 100's of plants. They observed, smelled, picnicked, proposed marriage(!), or just kicked back at the historic South Battery Wall and watched boats traverse Buttermilk Channel.

Participatory teaching is the Earth Matter way of sharing how to care for this magical plant and to deepen people's connection to the earth. We welcomed drop-in visitors, and civic, corporate, and educational teams who learned from the experts how to harvest the first buds.

No rogue pickin' please!

Workshops, demonstrations, and activities allowed hands-on exploration: how to bottle the fragrance, dry your own bud, and other playful things you can do with lavender.

Interested? Join as a member and come to our Soiree on June 1!

Schedule your corporate team to harvest on a weekday in June.

Email: corporatevolunteers@earthmatter.org to learn more.



The NYC Lavender Festival is hosted on the second weekend in June - when the buds are bloomin' and the bees are buzzin'



"I loved pitching in, helping host lavender distillation alembic workshops, and greeting people when they come to our events!"

-Rasheda Mitchell, Board Member



Island Partners



Carreau Club



Fauzia's

GROW 24/7

ISLAND OYSTER



Joe Coffee

Little Era's



PIZZA YARD

PL AY



Spectr



the bee conservancy

THE FRIENDS OF GOVERNORS ISLAND

THREES BREWING



THE POETRY SOCIETY OF NEW YORK



Collaborators

Astoria Pug

Ayco Charitable Fund

Bard High School Early College

Barnard College

Battery Park City Authority

Big Reuse

BioCycle

BKRot

Bronx Solid Waste Advisory Board

Brooklyn Botanical Garden

Brooklyn Butcher Blocks

Brooklyn College

Brooklyn Solid Waste Advisory Board

Brooklyn Veterans Association

Brotherhood and Sister Sol

Cafeteria Culture

Catholic Worker

Center for Zero Waste Design

Chinese American Planning Council Inc.

Columbia University School of Architecture

Compost Power

Consulate General of Denmark NY

Cornell University

CUNY Internships

Downtown Alliance

East New York Farms!

El Puente

Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Farm School NYC

Fidelity Charitable

Fulton Stall Market

Glass Clouds Ensemble Performance

Goodale Farms

Green City Force

Green Feen

Green Guerillas

Green Map

Greenwood Cemetery

Institute for Local Self Reliance

Laguardia Arts High School

Lower East Side Ecology Center

Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board

Millennium High School

Natural Resources Defense Council

New York Botanical Garden - Library

New York Presbyterian

NOFA-NY

NYBG Bronx Green Up

NYC City Service Corps

NYC Clean Soil Bank

NYS Dept. Environment Conservation

NYSAR 3

NYU Gallatin

NYU WetLab

PACE University

Pratt Institute

Queens Botanical Garden

Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board

Red Hook Initiative

Riverside Park Conservancy

Sanitation Foundation

Save Our Compost Coalition

Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden

Solar One

SUNY Stony Brook

Sustainable Generation

SWALE

The Beacon School

The HOPE Program

The New School Parson's School of Design

Transition Town Port Washington

Uptown Boogie

Urban Park Rangers

Urban Soils Institute

US Composting Council

USDA FFA

Waldorf - Steiner School

WE ACT

Wyckoff Farm

Wyckoff House Museum

Our Members

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 Israt Abedin
 Aaron Adams
 Dmitri Anishchuk
 Jackie Bach
 Robin Barton
 Jared Becker
 Kathleen Kmet Becker
 Alice Bennahmias
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Reach out to us:
contact@earthmatter.org

Earth Matter NY Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our EIN/Tax ID: 27-0625845

Platinum Transparency 2024

Candid.

Special thanks to our Annual Report designer John Martin!

Charity Navigator





EARTH MATTER

Thanks for burrowing with us in 2024, looking forward to wriggling around with you this year!