

PREFACE

The theme of the Year 2000 Composting in the Southeast Conference and Trade Show - Y2K composting - is that composting is about to enter a new phase as we enter the new millennium. Composting is a well-established process that has been used for centuries to create agriculturally valuable soil amendments. During the last several decades, composting has attained usefulness as a waste management tool. More recently, the processes that occur during composting have been employed for improving our environment, such as bioremediation, production of soil erosion-controlling materials and foundational materials for constructed wetlands, and reclaiming contaminated soils for establishment of vegetation.

As we enter the 21st millennium, we realize more than ever the interconnectedness of our global systems. The activities of humans affect our entire world and the harnessing of the natural processes of degradation of organic materials provides the potential to reduce methane emissions; improve the quality of soil upon which our food, water, and air supply depends; restore degraded and contaminated lands; produce biodegradable products that will reduce the ever-increasing volume of trash generated by humans; and provide benign sources of energy to maintain quality of life and economic prosperity. The use and promotion of this technology begins at the local level and, as such, this conference is designed to provide practical tools for composting and compost utilization whose ultimate goal is a sustainable society.

Thanks to the many authors who have contributed valuable papers and presentations that continue to expand the knowledge of this important biological process. The sponsoring agencies and members of the Planning Committee recognize and appreciate the support of those attending the Conference. To all of you, I say "Good composting."

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