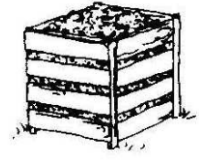


# COMPOSTING



## Overview of Longwood's Operation

*Longwood Gardens actively combines the pursuit of excellence, horticultural, art and science with a strong sense of environmental stewardship. We employ several ecologically sound activities to conserve our environmental resources. Creative, constructive and appropriate re-uses of recycled materials generated on site help accomplish this. Since composting is an excellent form of recycling, almost all of Longwood Gardens' organic materials are recycled into compost and reincorporated into the gardens as finished compost or mulch.*

### The "Dirt" on Longwood Composting

Annually, Longwood collects about 8,000 cubic yards of organic material – enough to cover a football field four feet deep - from on-site and from community farms and businesses. These organic materials include leaves, brush, wood chips, green plant material, horse manure, and even food scraps and compostable containers and dishware from Longwood's Terrace restaurant.

At its six acre composting facility, Longwood transforms these materials into about 3,000 cubic yards of finished compost and mulch products. Leaf litter and woody materials from on-site and from the community are processed for mulch that is used on garden beds and unpaved pathways. Other organic items are mixed in with manure and wood chips obtained from local sources to create long, narrow compost piles called windrows. These windrows are monitored and mixed for ten to twelve weeks. When the compost is finally completed, the nutrient-rich product is mixed into custom soil blends, spread on turf and agricultural fields, and incorporated into some potting mixes. Longwood's goal is to capture, compost, and reuse its discarded organic matter along with discarded organic matter from the surrounding community.

### The Benefits of Composting

Longwood Gardens' composting operation began in the 1980s and has recycled discarded organic material for over 20 years. The composting operation not only benefits Longwood's plants by providing high quality compost and mulch products, but it also benefits the environment and surrounding community. The operation creates products using organic materials from on-site and the community that would otherwise become waste in a landfill. By making compost and mulch products from these local goods and using them on site, instead of buying and hauling in new products, Longwood's environmental impact is greatly decreased.

#### **What is composted at Longwood Gardens :**

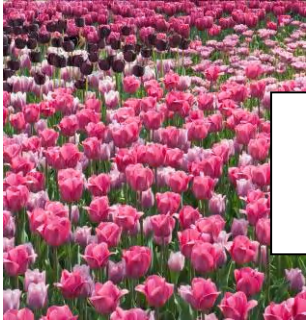
- "Brown," carbon-rich materials such as brush, stumps, wood chips, fiber pots, plant stakes, old pallets & compostable dish and flatware from our on-site Terrace restaurant
- "Green," nitrogen-rich materials such as spent annuals and other herbaceous plants, bulbs, turfgrass clippings, leaves, horse manure from local farms & food residuals from our on-site Terrace restaurant

#### **What is not composted at Longwood Gardens:**

- Dead animals
- Painted or pressure-treated wood, sawdust
- \*Non-organics (plastics, metal, stone, etc.)
- \*Paper or cardboard

\* = Part of Other On-Site Recycling Efforts

## The Process of Composting at Longwood



After display, plant material is delivered to Longwood's composting facility.

All materials - greens, brush, wood chips and food scraps - are gathered into piles.



The materials are processed using various machinery.



The finished compost and mulch products return to the gardens and are used in the beautiful planting displays.

## Interested in Getting Composting into your Business or Community?

To learn more about supporting or starting an operation similar to Longwood's in your community, get in touch with your state's Department of Environmental Protection.

For example, Longwood's composting operation is run under a PA Department of Environmental Protection On-Farm Composting permit.

More information about this permit and other options for composting on a farm scale, or larger, can be found at Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection website - <http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/> with a search for 'Composting Homepage'

