

# **U.S. Composting Council Announces Successful Completion of Million Tomato Compost Campaign**

*Gardeners grow more than One Million Tomatoes with 2,888 cubic yards of compost*

BETHESDA, Md. – Today the US Composting Council (USCC) announced the successful completion of the nation’s first-ever Million Tomato Compost Campaign. The campaign, launched last April, sought to boost the soil health of community gardens across the country and produce healthy, fresh food for local food pantries. The USCC spearheaded the donation of 2,888 cubic yards of compost from 85 compost manufacturers --enough to fill 540 dump trucks. Over 100 community gardens participated, resulting in the harvest of more than 1.2 million tomatoes. The campaign united compost manufacturers, chefs, community gardens and food pantries to build healthy soil for sustainably grown, local food.

Communities from Washington to Florida participated in the campaign, resulting in a wide range of community projects, such as the garden sponsored by the Tulalip Tribes Health Clinic in Washington state, which was planted with the help of the clinic’s patients. At the Vocational Training Center in Santa Maria California, the new community garden produced tomatoes for needy families through the local food bank.

“The one million tomatoes that community gardeners grew in compost are testament to the growing power of compost and the people power of dedicated sustainable gardening champions,” said Lori Scozzafava, Executive Director of the US Composting Council. “We’re proud of our work to spread the knowledge that using compost is nature’s way to grow fresh fruits and vegetables and build healthy soil.”

Celebrity Chef Nathan Lyon, chef and co-host of PBS’ “Growing a Greener World,” author of seasonal cookbook *Great Food Starts Fresh* and spokesperson for the campaign, worked to encourage gardeners to grow their own tomatoes in soil improved with compost while offering healthy tomato-based recipes for families.

“The Million Tomato Compost Campaign has proven that people across the country are hungry — not only for fresh, healthy sustainable food, but also for the tools they need to grow healthy food on their own. That starts with good soil and compost,” said Chef Lyon. “Starting with the soil is so important because healthy soil leads to healthy food, which builds healthy people and communities.”

Although tomatoes are one of the most popular items grown at home, they can be difficult for beginning gardeners to grow, so using compost is key to building productive soil. Adding compost can reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and allows soil to hold water well, which means plants need less water, and gardeners can spend less time caring for their plants. All of the compost manufacturers that participated in the Million Tomato Compost Campaign produce Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) compost, which certifies that their compost meets federal health and safety standards. It helps compost users purchase the correct product that they require for their landscape projects.

For photos, community stories and a graph showing the number of tomatoes grown, please visit the campaign website, [www.buy-compost.com](http://www.buy-compost.com). The site also provides information for home gardeners on where to buy compost and how to use it in the yard and garden.

## **About the US Composting Council**

The Million Tomato Compost Campaign is a program of the US Composting Council, a national organization dedicated to the development, expansion and promotion of the composting industry. Established in 1990, the [US Composting Council](http://www.usccouncil.org) (USCC) achieves this mission by encouraging, supporting and performing compost related research, promoting best management practices, establishing standards, educating professionals and the public about the benefits of composting and compost utilization, enhancing compost product quality, and developing training materials for composters and markets for compost

products. USCC members include compost producers, marketers, equipment manufacturers, product suppliers, academic institutions, public agencies, nonprofit groups and consulting/engineering firms.

The USCC is a non-profit 501(c) (6) organization that also directs the Composting Council Research and Education Foundation (CCREF), a 501(c) (3) charitable foundation, which administers public and private research and education activities.

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