



The Green Team News

August 2014 Newsletter

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Hello Green Team Teacher,

Happy August! We hope you are enjoying your summer break! Here at the Green Team, we are busy preparing for another year. Registration for the 2014-2015 school year has begun. If you would like to register online, [click here](#). Green Team kits will be mailed in September.

Summer Tips for Managing Your School Compost Pile

- Add water if your compost pile has dried out. It should be as damp as a wrung out sponge.
- Check for signs of “soil life” – there should be earthworms, sowbugs, and other decomposer organisms in your compost pile. If not, add a few shovelfuls of garden soil to introduce more compost critters.
- If there are fruit flies or odors, add more “browns,” such as leaves or paper products.
- Finished compost should look like dark, crumbly soil. Apply finished compost to your garden 2-4 weeks before you plant, or add a handful to each planting hole.
- Always leave 2-3” of compost in the bottom of your compost bin when you harvest your compost, to inoculate your new pile with decomposer organisms.

Summer Tips for Managing Your School Garden

- Enjoy the harvest! Summer is the most productive time for gardens; encourage student or parent volunteers to help harvest produce.
- Use mulch between plants to keep weeds down and minimize the need to weed.
- Incorporate kids’ summer programs for weeding, watering and planting tasks.
- Have volunteers sign up for an Adopt-a-bed plan.
- Use bi-lingual templates for tracking, volunteer forms and log forms, see the link below!
 - <http://growing-gardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Summer-in-the-School-Garden-A-Resource-for-Working-with-Volunteers-to-Maintain-your-School-Garden.pdf>

School Programs, Resources and Professional Development

- Have you seen the new [Food Waste Reduction page](#) on the Green Team website? It is full of great resources all related to food waste diversion and composting at schools. We plan to refine and add to this page this coming year, so stay tuned.
- [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom](#) offers a number of Resources to support School Gardening efforts. These include Directories of School gardens in Massachusetts; 16 How-to-Guides for Getting Started in the School Garden; 40 garden-based lessons for grades 1 through 4 and garden mentoring. [View garden-based resources.](#)
- **Free Technical Assistance for your School Waste Diversion Programs** – For schools interested in some additional technical assistance to help start or improve recycling or composting programs, MassDEF is accepting applications for technical assistance on municipal solid waste and recycling projects. Massachusetts communities may apply for up to 80 hours of in-kind technical assistance from their MassDEP Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) for a recycling or waste reduction project.

Applications are accepted until August 26, 2014. To learn more about the program, to find your MAC or to submit an application, visit the [SMRP Municipal In-Kind Technical Assistance Grants](#) page at the MassDEP website.

- **The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Environmentally Preferable Products (EPP) Procurement Program at the Operational Services Division** is excited to announce the launch of the revised [EPP website!](#) The updated site features information on environmental products and services, links to new statewide contracts for EPPs, and environmental purchasing tips for your school.
- **The US Green Building Council MA** is offering mini-grants for schools participating in the [Green Apple Day of Service](#) (GADOS). There are currently 6 mini-grants provided by NSTAR for energy saving GADOS projects and 1 from Capitol Waste Services for any GADOS project. See their [GADOS Mini-Grant webpage](#) for information about eligibility and to apply. Applications are due by Aug. 15, 2014.

There are a lot of great opportunities, contests and events coming up over the next few months. See below for dates and descriptions!

August

August 8th - Green Schools for the 21st Century Training. This training is modeled after the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program. Learn how to implement the 3 Pillars and exemplary practices in your K-12 school. The training takes place from 8:30am-4:00pm, at 36 Lincoln Street, Manchester By The Sea, MA. Please [click here](#) to register.

Aug 21st - [The Harvard Forest](#) offers a Forest Ecology training for teachers of grades 4-12. Learn how to implement field studies related to local ecosystems, invasive species and/or global climate change with your students right in your schoolyard.

September

Sept 27th – The [2014 Green Apple Day of Service](#) gives parents, teachers, students, companies and local organizations the opportunity to transform all schools into healthy, safe and productive learning environments through local service projects. Check out project ideas and helpful event resources [here](#) and [register](#) your 2014 project today. Apply for a [mini-grant](#) by August 15 to help with your event.

Enjoy the rest of your summer! We look forward to communicating with you as a [The Green Team](#) member again next school year!

Sean Pontani & Diana Balmonte
Green Team, Program Administrators

Tel: (413) 586-7350 ext. 240

Fax: (413) 586-7351

Email: recycle@thegreenteam.org

Tel: (413) 586-7350 ext. 225

Fax: (413) 586-7350

Email: recycle@thegreenteam.org

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