

Project Proponent: The Marquis Project
Project Title: Composting 101 – First Aid For Our Community and Our Planet
Project Number: WRAPP Fund Project #01-49

In 2002, the WRAPP Fund approved grant funding of \$24,700 to support “*Composting 101 – First Aid for Our Community and Our Planet*”, a project managed by community partners: The Marquis Project, Clark Community Consulting, Westman Recycling Council, Brent Hansen Environmental and the City of Brandon.

The goal of the project was to promote the economic and environmental benefits of backyard composting in Brandon and the Westman area by:

- Educating the community on composting through print materials, a website, event displays, media promotions, and workshops;
- Arranging public composting demonstration sites; and
- Creating an educational composting workshop template for use by teachers of all grade levels.

Printed information and project brochures were dispersed to the public at counter displays throughout the Westman area. Staff created a Composting 101 Project brochure that included a feedback/interest response form for public distribution. Promotional information was distributed by volunteers sourced through the Environmental Studies course at Crocus Plains Regional High School and The Marquis Project. The City of Brandon included brochures in water bills and having brochures available at the spring Household Hazardous Waste Day. Resource Conservation Manitoba (RCM) also advertised the project by providing the Composting 101 project contact information at the bottom of most RCM Compost Action Project Materials. Workshop feedback evaluation forms were accessed through RCM while project staff independently developed Early/ Middle Years student surveys.

Project information was included in Westman Recycling Council and The Marquis Project’s newsletters. Workshop information was issued in a CKX-TV ad for the Westman area. The project gained further recognition when staff set up a display which also included an active/sample vermicomposter at various public events.

A monthly Brandon Sun newspaper article followed up on the activities carried out by two Brandon area families – one urban and one rural – learning how to incorporate composting into their daily lives.

Community workshops were conducted between September 2002 and February 2003, in Brandon, Minnedosa, and Shoal Lake. A database developed through a backyard composting “Bin Distribution Blitz” Participation survey in 2001 was used as a contact pool (over 300 households) for organizing the workshops.

- Three community sites showcased different types and applications of compost:
- Hog manure, straw and woodchips was applied to flowerbeds at the Riverbank Discovery Centre.

- Residential yard waste was applied as a top dressing on a turf area at the Brandon Cemetery.
- Hog waste was applied to young boulevard trees and yard waste was incorporated into the soil prior to tree planting at the City of Brandon Tree Nursery.

School presentations on composting, which also included how to construct worm bins for vermicomposting, were presented to all grade levels - 20 classrooms of over 400 students and teachers. Project staff created a slide presentation and a take-home activity booklet for the early years grades on general composting and vermicomposting. Each class had the responsibility of maintaining their worm bin. Students kept records of the composting process and fed the worms organic leftovers from home.

Project staff collected feedback surveys from students and teachers, conducted phone follow ups with the teachers, and visited classrooms. At the end of the project, project staff created an educational composting workshop template that can be modified to suit any class, grade, teacher, and division in Manitoba.

The project staff also introduced the Composting 101 educational component to Scout and Guide organizations at the regional/local levels to potentially develop an “Eco-Badge” program that would feature composting initiatives, presentations, and experiments.

More information about this project is available at:
<http://www.marquisproject.com/composting101/index.html>.