

# Master Composter Conference 2008

## Coordinators Network Forum

### Issues raised by Coordinators

#### Recruitment

- Recruiting volunteers from 'hard to reach' communities
- Recruitment - what works? Recommendations
- Recruitment
- Recruiting younger volunteers (in their 20s)

#### Motivation

- Ideas for kick-starting volunteering
- Keeping volunteers motivated x 2
- Retention of volunteers
- Sustainability
- Sustainable groups beyond training (in districts)
- Recognition and rewards

#### Managing volunteers

- What the volunteers say

#### Expanding the volunteer remit

- Training in general recycling issues
- MC diversification

#### Evaluating schemes

- Monitoring and reports
- Evaluation of schemes
- Logging volunteer activities

#### Coordinating

- Coordination – how much time does it take? Is it seasonal?
- Sharing best practice

#### Funding

- Drawing in external funding
- Funding

#### Other

- Public hysteria about rats

## **Discussion: Recruitment**

### **How?**

- Use Garden Organic members
- Staggered mail shots
- Press releases
- Local radio gardening show
- Newspaper editorial
- Piggy-backing on other messages
- FoE and other green groups
- Chamber of commerce – asking to contact (former) employees – way to contact recent retirees
- Council magazines – retired people read
- Recently retired hang out in garden centres and DIY stores!

### **Recruiting hard to reach**

- Tried Indian community day centre – got the manager to come along to the course
- Learning disabilities day centre – discussion of what can/cant be composted
- Duke of Edinburgh – have to do a certain number of hours of voluntary week
- University Green Groups

### **Issues**

- Need to explain clearly that it is not a composting course
- Volunteer bureaux – dissent as to whether successful or not
- Allotment groups – issues as to whether they compost or not and their waste never enters the waste stream

## **Monitoring**

- How to get volunteers to send back work sheets?
- Freepost 'cheque book' with a 'nearly finished' reminder
- Quarterly prize draw
- Volunteers find filling in a form very tedious. Give them a range of options, including an electronic form to fill in.
- Avoid double counting
- Its useful to assess how many people volunteers have spoken to

### **Why monitor?**

- To justify the expense
- Can be done through comparing the compost bins sold or the amount of press coverage volunteers receive
- The lottery assesses volunteer labour at a rate of £50 per day
- We need to know the amount of organic waste diverted rather than the number of volunteer hours

## **Motivating**

- In Flanders, volunteers are pampered as much as possible, working with them to facilitate their idea
- Saying 'thank you' goes a long way
- Is there an acceptable 'lapse rate' of volunteers?
- Those that are not doing anything tend to be the ones that lapse.
- You need to judge the value of actively supporting each volunteer.
- The experience from the BTCV tree wardens is that it is always only 1/4 to 1/3 of those trained who remain active, whatever the work.
- It helps to give volunteers opportunities to diversify, for example in Flanders they have set up a volunteer choir from a group of Master Composters – provides opportunity for social contact.

## **Expanding the Remit**

- Can link in with other campaigns eg:
- real nappy campaigns
- water conservation efforts
- love food hate waste campaigns

## **Funding**

- Lottery 'local food' campaign includes a session on home and community that could be related to composting. There are 3 categories for funding.