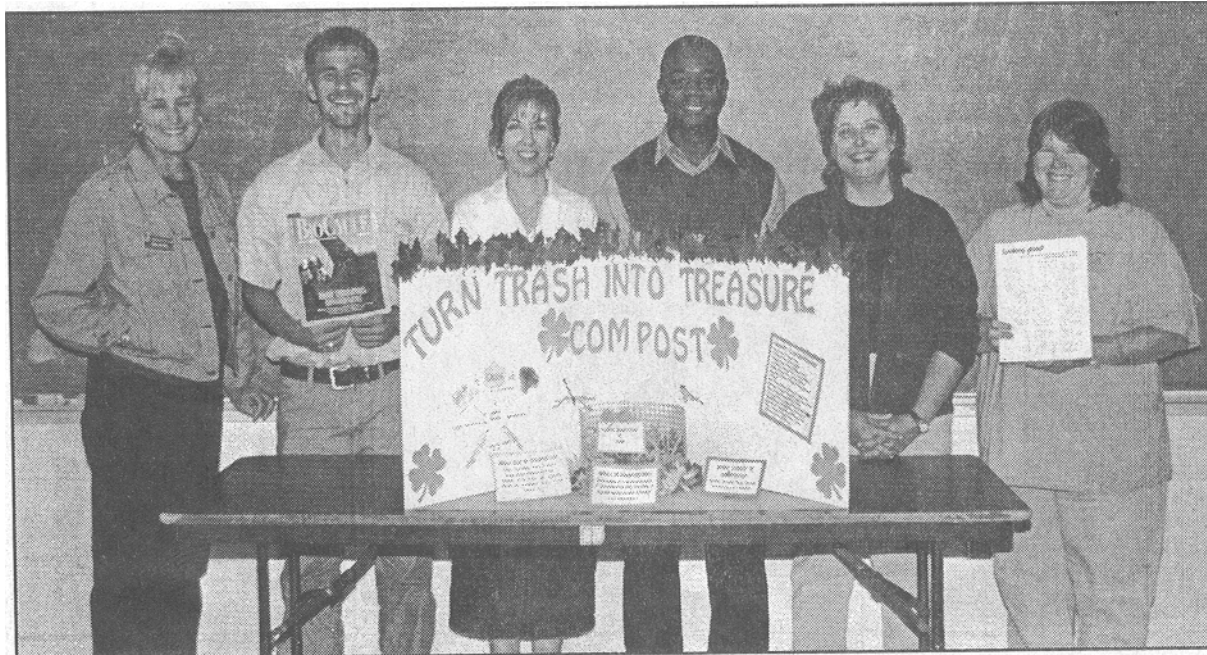


The Monticello News



FOUNDERS OF INNOVATIVE COMPOSTING CLUB
Composting Club Outlines Initiatives

Jasper County's new composting recycling club outlined initiatives for the composting educational projects being piloted at Piedmont Academy and the Jasper County Alternative School during its second meeting last Thursday.

The goal of the school projects will be to produce compost, fertilizing mixture from vegetable matter, that can be stocked at the local Farmer's Market and provided to interested consumers on a donation basis. If the projects take off well at the two local schools, it would be the only such existing educational program in the Southeast, according to club visionary Dr. Jean Walter.

Present club members include (left to right) Dr. Walter, County Extension Agent; Britt Faucette, Education Program Specialist with the University of Georgia; Tracy Trovillo of Family Connection; Evren Williams, director of Project

Phoenix; Missy Wilson, Piedmont Academy teacher; and Robin Mann of Jasper County Food and Nutritional Services.

The members are pictured with a display made by Jasper County Middle School student Erin Mann. Dr. Walter encourages any interested participants to be active in the organization.

Dr. Walter said that a number of local businesses had expressed an interest in seeing the program grow. They include the Jasper County Board Office, Family Connection and Jasper County Commission. Individuals contributing to the composting project include Joan Thornton, Ken Tillman, Peggy Billerman and Jerry Goldin.

The growth of the project will be tracked each month by the *BioCycle* publication. Mr. Faucette is a writer for the environmental magazine.

Environmental magazine.

In addition to cultivating compost bins at the schools, participating students will have the opportunity to take field trips relating to composting. Such trips would include ventures to the UGA Bioconversion Center in Athens and to the Butts County prison where composting is currently utilized.

With the program still in its formative stage, club members are impressed with the response from students at both schools.

"It's exciting to see the enthusiasm of the kids and teachers Mr. Williams and Mrs. Wilson," said Dr. Walter.

The alternative school has gotten their composting project off to a good start during the last two weeks, according to Mr. Williams. The students have participated in a two week unit on composting curriculum including a class meeting with Mr. Faucette and a video study of composting students in Maine.

Following the study of composting techniques, the students were tested on composting knowledge prior to embarking on a journey to purchase building materials from Jasper County Lumber Company Friday morning. A new compost bin was erected later that afternoon.

"The students were so excited about the project that the compost bin was constructed in just a matter of hours," said Mr. Williams.

The students had their first "turning" Monday afternoon after adding more compost materials, salvaged from remaining lunch scrapes, and water to the bin. The initial organic substances, dead leaves, grass clippings and manure, were contributed by the students from home collections.

"The bin will be managed by the students. Hopefully in two months we will have successful results with a full bin," the director said.

Piedmont Academy's project will kick into overdrive next week, according to Mrs. Wilson. Plans for the location of the bin are in the works now. Senior physics students are designing the bin by calculating volume and capacity and will begin labor next week. Sophomore biology students will assist with the construction and perform monitory duties.

"The students are surprisingly motivated," said Mrs. Wilson. "They don't have the perception that it will be smelly and yucky like most adults. They are capable of so much more than we ever give them credit for."

The compost project will help with the students with their study of micro-organisms, said Mrs. Wilson.

Persons interested in joining the Composting Club may contact Dr. Walter at 468-6479.