



51 Chambers St, room 228, New York NY 10007
Contact: Jeanne Hodesh 212.341.2258; 734.255.7568;
jhodesh@greenmarket.grownyc.org
Shirley Limongi 212.788.7125; 917.359.4203
SLimongi@council.nyc.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Yorkers Turn Spoils into Soil, Reducing City Waste
Compost Collection at Greenmarket Expands through Pilot Program

March 4, 2011, NEW YORK, NY – Today, New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and nonprofit group GrowNYC, joined by Ron Bergamini of Action Carting, announce the launch of a pilot program to provide composting services to NYC residents at 6 new Greenmarket locations. The pilot was developed by GrowNYC’s Greenmarket and Office of Recycling Outreach and Education programs.

Responding to an increasing demand for more drop-off locations, shoppers can now drop off fruit and vegetable scraps at a total of 10 GrowNYC Greenmarkets where they will be transported to a compost facility and turned into fertile soil amendment for local farming projects and other uses.

Food comprises about 17% of NYC’s waste stream. When this material is sent to a landfill it contributes to NYC’s disposal costs and creates greenhouse gas emissions. When composted, food scraps and other organic waste become a useful product that adds nutrients and improves the quality of soil for street trees, gardens and more.

GrowNYC’s commitment to composting is not a new one, and has hosted a collection site since 1994 at its Union Square Greenmarket, organized by the Lower East Side Ecology Center. The new pilot significantly expands this and other existing, ongoing collections conducted by the Western Queens Compost Initiative and the Ft. Greene Compost Project.

“Last year in my Food Works speech one of our goals was to get more people to compost their scraps. You could throw a banana peel or apple core in the garbage but that’s just wasting valuable energy,” said New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “That’s why I’m thrilled to be able to support the opening of these new compost drop-off sites, and what better place to offer them than at the Greenmarkets, where many of the fruits and vegetables sold benefit from the rich, nutrient-filled compost NYC residents will be contributing to every time they drop their food scraps.”

“We’re thrilled that Speaker Quinn and the New York City Council is helping us offer residents a tangible resource that will shrink their trash pile-up and create a precious resource that will benefit local gardens and farms,” said GrowNYC Executive Director Marcel Van Ooyen.



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“Compost collection complements other services GrowNYC offers city dwellers looking to lower their environmental impact, including Greenmarkets, textile collections, cell phone and battery recycling, environmental education and technical and material assistance we provide community and school gardens.”

“We’re pleased to expand our commercial composting services to this partnership with GrowNYC,” said Action Environmental Services CEO Ron Bergamini. “The success and continued growth of the Greenmarkets demonstrates a genuine commitment by residents to sustainability and being part of the solution.”

Based on the success of the pilot, GrowNYC will explore running the 6 new collection sites on a permanent basis.

For more information, visit <http://www.grownyc.org/compost> or call 212.788.7964.

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GrowNYC improves New York City’s quality of life through environmental programs that transform communities block by block and empower all New Yorkers to secure a clean and healthy environment for future generations. Compost at Greenmarket Pilot program is organized by Greenmarket and Office of Recycling Outreach and Education, programs of GrowNYC. Greenmarket promotes regional agriculture and ensures a continuing supply of fresh, local produce for New Yorkers. Greenmarket currently operates 51 Greenmarkets in all five boroughs. Office of Recycling Outreach & Education works to increase participation in curbside recycling program using a grassroots, community-by-community strategy. Borough-wide coordinators work to identify the specific challenges to recycling in a neighborhood and address those needs with workshops for tenants and supers, community events centered on education and special collection programs for textiles, electronics and compost. For more information, visit us at www.grownyc.org.

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