“Compost happens!” Perhaps you have seen this statement printed on t-shirts or in farm-related magazines. Each time I read this I am always left bewildered: Yes, compost happens, but how?

Even after surveying the vast technical literature, one might still ask: What is compost? Do I have to turn it? Should I layer everything or mix it? How do I know if it is good or not? How do I know it is ready? And did it really happen?

Join us for an opportunity to delve into the practical and technical details of biodynamic composting.

In this workshop we'll explore how we can develop a qualitative understanding of the dynamic processes in the compost pile, and consider the significance of compost in the whole farm / garden organism—which ultimately means to think about how the composting process is intimately tied to the social process of the enterprise, staff and farm community.

The workshop will involve on-site learning activities and will also address the following questions:

• How to manage and organize a compost site
• How to mix, build, and turn windrows / compost piles
• How and when to apply the biodynamic preparations
• How to recognize signs of the different phases of the composting process
• How to develop qualitative ways of understanding that recognize and focus on dynamic process

A shorter description of the workshop

During this workshop we will deeply engage in the biodynamic approach to the art and science of composting. We will cover all of the practical and technical details, including sourcing materials, building and turning piles, and working with the biodynamic preparations. We will also explore how we can develop a qualitative understanding of the dynamic processes in the compost pile, and consider the significance of compost in the whole farm organism.
Bruno's bio

Bruno Follador is the director of the Living Soils project at The Nature Institute in Ghent, NY. He is a Brazilian geographer, consultant and biodynamic researcher with a deep commitment to the Goethean approach to Science and has been working with biodynamic composting methods and Ehrenfried Pfeiffer’s Chromatography for several years. He has worked with farmers and organizations in Brazil, Europe and North America.

For a fuller description of my biography—if needed—the link to the Living Soils page could be added - http://www.natureinstitute.org/about/staff/bfollador.htm

About the Living Soils Project at The Nature Institute

Soil health is bound up with the dynamics of the whole farm organism, which includes the inner perspectives of the farmers. In this new initiative, we strive to foster not only a shift in agricultural practices but also a shift in human consciousness, out of which new ways of interacting with nature in agriculture can develop. Our goal is to help farmers cultivate dynamic ways of seeing and understanding that can be concretely applied on farms, especially in composting. We provide on-farm consultations, qualitative soil and compost testing, workshops, and publications.

Flexible Programme outline:

**Friday 7.30-9.00pm**

Welcome and Introductions

Session on:

**The Inner and Outer Gestures of Composting (1)**

The focus of this evening presentation will be to stimulate a different way of seeing and relating to compost. We'll focus on questions such as:

- How can we develop a living, practical, and personal relationship with compost and soil fertility that goes beyond a mentality of waste management and yields?
How does our way of seeing, thinking, and speaking contribute to creating our agricultural reality? And within this context could we start seeing the compost pile as an outer expression of our way of thinking and relating to nature?

**Saturday 9am – 5pm**

- Questions from the previous day, thoughts and reflections.
- Perception Exercises in a group activity

Session on:

**From Decomposition to Composition: A Practical and Qualitative Approach to Building and Caring for Compost Piles (2)**

We’ll delve not only into practical and technical details such as mixing, C/N ratio, compost site management, machinery, building and turning the compost pile. But most importantly, we’ll focus on how we can develop a qualitative understanding of the C/N ratio, the four elements and the breakdown and up-building process of the compost pile. We’ll also explore how we can learn to access the different qualities of the organic matter and the compost pile itself and begin building a personal relationship with this whole process.

**Sunday 9am – 12:30pm**

- Questions from the previous day, thoughts and reflections.
- Perception Exercises in a group activity.

Session on:

**More Humus More Humanity: Culture, Soil Fertility and Biodynamic Agriculture (3)**

*The themes and contents of Part 1, 2 and 3 will permeate the whole weekend and will not just be confined to the formal presentations.*