

We bury a huge amount of food scraps and other organic rubbish in landfill every day. This waste breaks down in anaerobic conditions producing methane, a gas that is over 20 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. All organic food waste collected by Globalworming is vermicomposted (fed to worms) - an aerobic process which produces one of the best known organic fertilisers.



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Report on organic waste collection from the Living Green Festival 2013

13th October 2013

On Sunday the 13th October 2013, the organisers of the Living Green Festival (LGF) arranged for Global worming to provide wheelie bins at the waste stations to collect all organic waste from the event in Canberra. These bins were made available to festival attendees and were also used by several operators of food outlets to collect organic waste such as food scraps, coffee grinds, orange peel and pulp, tea bags, bread and paper towels. This waste was subsequently fed to worms to be recycled into an organic fertiliser—a process which is called vermicomposting.

Number of bins and capacity at the LGF in 2013

At the festival a total of 8 wheelie bins were made available with a total standing capacity of 1,920 litres.

Table 1: Number of bins and capacity, LGF, 13th October 2013

Waste stations (2)	
Number of bins	
- 120 litre wheelie bins	0
- 240 litre wheelie bins	8
Total	8
Total capacity of bins (Litres)	1,920

Volume and weight of waste collected at LGF

Globalworming keeps detailed records of the weight of waste that is collected and any contaminants that are found in organic waste bins (inorganic material such as straws, plastic bottles and aluminium cans). Additionally, the volume of waste was estimated based on how full the bins were.

Total organic waste collected at LGF

Almost **340 kilograms of organic waste** was collected on the 13th October 2013 at the LGF with an uncompressed volume of **1,370 litres** (Table 2). The volume of this organic waste was estimated uncompressed (or natural compression) prior to weighing.

The majority of the weight of organic waste collected was from the peel and pulp of oranges and other fruit along with coffee grinds. The majority of the volume of organic waste collected was from the compostable plates and cups.

Table 2: Organic waste collected, Sunday the 13th October 2013

Source	Total weight	Approximate volume ^(a) (uncompressed)
Global worming bins		
- organic	339.5 kg	1,368 litres
- inorganic	< 0.5 kg	2 litres
TOTAL ORGANIC WASTE	339.5 kg	1,370 litres

(a) Estimate of the uncompressed volume - the volume that the organic waste takes up in the bins at the time of the collection where there has only been natural compression of the organic waste.

Contaminants

In 2013 the waste stations were managed by volunteers from 'Wastebusters'. Following on, there were very few inorganic contaminants found in the organic waste collection wheelie bins. Some inorganic contaminants were still found including

- Non compostable cutlery (one or two stall holders appeared to have used some non-compostable cutlery)
- Small ring pulls from non-dairy milk containers

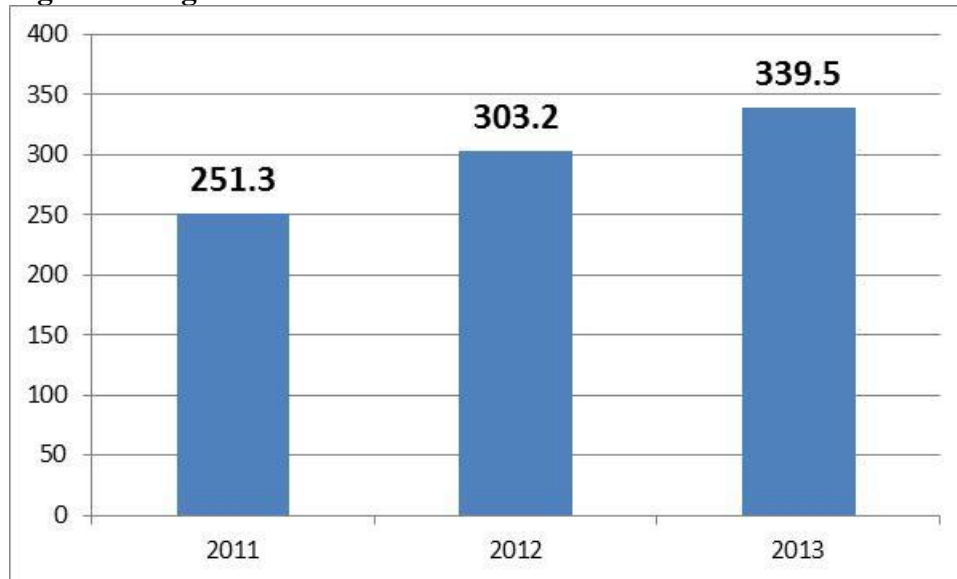
Overall the collection worked very well and the volunteers from 'Wastebusters' did an excellent job sorting the waste.

Organic waste collection for LGF in 201 compared with previous years

There was an increase in both the weight and volume of organic waste collected in 2013 compared with 2012.

There was a 12% increase in the amount of waste collected from the LGF in 2013 compared with 2012 (Figure 1). This is likely to be mainly due to the growth in the number of people attending the LGF.

Figure 1: Organic waste collected from the LGF



Why collect organic waste?

Reduces waste going to landfill

In Australia well over half of the waste that is buried in landfills is organic. It is becoming increasingly expensive to dispose of waste in this way.

Reduces methane production

As organic waste breaks down in anaerobic conditions (like in landfill) it produces methane, a gas that is over 20 times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. Vermicomposting is an aerobic process.

Recycles organic waste into a natural fertiliser and long term carbon sink

When organic waste is buried in landfills, the nutrients are lost. This seems bizarre given the reliance of Australian farmers on chemical fertilisers (largely a by-product of the petrochemical industry) and the very low carbon stores in Australian soils. Vermicast is a complete soil conditioner that greatly improves the structure of soil and is a long term carbon sink.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES:

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