

PRESS RELEASE

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Sonoma Compost Sponsors 2012 US Biochar Conference

County's All-Local Composting Operation Explores Biochar Production, Use

Rohnert Park, CA – Sonoma Compost, Sonoma County's largest, local, full-circle composting operation, is sponsoring the 2012 US Biochar Conference, held July 29 – August 1 at Sonoma State University, in Rohnert Park, California.

Sonoma Compost operates its Organic Recycling Program on behalf of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency, accepting yard trimmings and vegetative food discards that are placed in curbside containers by local residents as well as yard trimmings delivered directly to the site by landscapers, local farmers, wineries, tree trimmers, and the public. At the forefront of compost technology, Sonoma Compost makes their high-quality composts available for sale to the public for all kinds of agricultural activities, from backyard gardening to large-scale crop production. The company also offers biochar for sale by the bag or bulk tote.

“We’re very interested in the promise of biochar, and we are investigating producing it ourselves,” said Will Bakx, Soil Scientist at Sonoma Compost. “Although experts acknowledge that biochar is still in the experimental stages, we know this highly porous, inert material works best when teamed with compost. I’m doing my own studies with wine barrels and seed flats, to observe plant behavior both with and without biochar in the soil.”

As part of the 2012 US Biochar Conference, Sonoma Compost will host a facility tour on Wednesday, August 1, from 1-3 p.m. The tour offers participants a short course in composting, starting with a chronology that follows organic matter from receiving through the finished, retail product. The principles of composting and monitoring the composting process will be demonstrated, along with tips for recognizing and making high-quality compost that provides the maximum benefit to plants.

The Sonoma Compost tour is offered as part of the 2012 US Biochar Conference, and is available to conference attendees during registration. Bus transportation from the Sonoma State University conference site will be provided.

Space is limited, and registration is required. For conference registration, visit <http://2012.biochar.us.com/registration>. For those not attending the whole conference a Wednesday-only pass is available that includes the Sonoma Compost tour. For one-day registration, visit <http://2012.biochar.us.com/special>.

About Biochar

Biochar is a solid material obtained from the thermo chemical conversion of biomass in an oxygen-limited environment. The fine-grained, highly porous charcoal can be used as a soil amendment. Recent studies show that it can increase agricultural yields, reduce the need for fertilizers, and conserve irrigation water. Biochar can also yield valuable by-products such as gasses that can be used to produce renewable, clean energy.

About the Conference

The 2012 US Biochar Conference is designed to advance understanding of the economic, scientific, and policy issues related to biochar as an amendment for soils and as an agent for carbon sequestration. To learn more, visit www.2012.biochar.us.com.

For more information about Sonoma Compost, visit <http://www.sonomacompost.com>.

Note to Editors: To arrange for conference press access, contact Oren Wool, oren@biochar.us.com.

For additional information visit the Sonoma Biochar Initiative website at <http://sonomabiocharinitiative.org>.

The Sonoma Biochar Initiative (SBI) is dedicated to promoting biochar education, production, and use. SBI is sponsored by the Sonoma Ecology Center, a Sonoma Valley non-profit working collaboratively to sustain and enhance ecological health.