



Waste Not: *Responsibly Disposing of All Food Waste and Nearly All Restaurant Products*

Requirement:

Compost 100% of pre- and post-consumer waste from restaurant, and more than 90% of all products used in the restaurant.

Why Do It:

Composting at such a high rate reduces food waste, reduces energy lost, and encourages sustainable practices for guests while aiding the actual function of the conservatory. The education piece is key here. As many are still unfamiliar with what composting is and how it works, public gardens can educate by example. Effectively communicating that your facility composts, and how you compost, is as important as composting itself. The more people compost, the less waste goes into the environment, and the more energy is saved.

How It Works:

We compost all pre- and post-consumer organic waste from our café in green compostable bags. Likewise, more than 90 percent of the products used in our café are compostable. Upon leaving Phipps, organic waste is taken to AgRecycle's composting facility, where it breaks down to become a natural fertilizer and soil amendment rich in nutrients and minerals. A portion of this compost is brought back to Phipps to organically fertilize our sustainable landscapes.

Our china and silverware are washable and reusable, which eliminates the energy, material and water resources necessary to produce and haul disposable serviceware. Our cups are made from compostable, vegetable-based starches, and our napkins are made of 100-percent unbleached recycled paper. We provide compostable containers and serviceware for takeout orders.

Why It Works:

Having so strong a commitment to composting reduces Café Phipps' carbon footprint and reduces waste and energy. Likewise, by reusing our compost as fertilizer, we organically and responsibly grow plants while reducing the need to purchase other fertilizers. In the Café, composting doesn't detract from the dining experience at all. If anything, Café Phipps strong messaging works as a learning opportunity for guests, who can take information from how the Café operates and apply it to their daily life. Overall, Phipps' composting efforts reduce energy and food waste, while doubling as a teachable environment.

Messaging:

Composting all food waste and over 90% of food products is in line with Café Phipps' mission statement:

The mission of Café Phipps is to provide our visitors with fresh, healthy meals featuring local, organic, sustainably produced and seasonal ingredients whenever possible; to create an enjoyable green dining experience for visitors of all ages; and to highlight the important connections between people, plants and the planet.

Obstacles:

Some of the key obstacles to composting at a high level include cost, facilities and availability. As facilities like public gardens have resources at their disposal to invest in composting and change their facilities to accommodate composting, individuals may not be able to. Compost is an additional cost on top of regular curbside trash and recycling collection, so individual guests may not be able to afford paying for it. But, for a public garden, making that investment is a responsible environmental decision that will have a large, positive impact.

Historic Media Release:

For Immediate Release: June 3, 2015

Café Phipps Earns Prestigious 3-Star Rating as a Certified Green Restaurant

Green Restaurant Association honors Pittsburgh's premier public garden for sustainable food service.

Pittsburgh, Pa.—[Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens](#) is pleased to announce that [Café Phipps](#) was re-certified as a 3-star Certified Green Restaurant® by the [Green Restaurant Association](#) (GRA), a national nonprofit devoted to helping restaurants become environmentally responsible. Receiving 175.61 GreenPoints™ on GRA's rigorous rating scale, and having implemented 61 environmental steps, Phipps has gone 75.61% above and beyond the minimum requirements for certification. Café Phipps serves the Pittsburgh community by offering fresh, sustainable and inventive cuisine that is healthy for people and the planet.

As a longtime advocate for green building, restorative gardening and environmental outreach, Phipps raises the bar among cultural institutions when it comes to sustainability. Among its progressive practices, Café Phipps eliminated plastic disposables and bottled water; grows produce in a green rooftop garden; emphasizes antibiotic, pesticide and GMO free, as well as local, fair trade and organic ingredients; provides vegan and vegetarian options; has an extensive recycling program; and composts all pre- and post-consumer food waste.

Going hand in hand with Café Phipps' green operations is the establishment's dedication to offering wholesome fare for guests of all ages. The public garden is especially concerned about safeguarding the health of young visitors, offering a children's menu that features whole grains, organic fruits and vegetables, and ingredients that are minimally processed, low fat and low salt with no added sugar. Additionally, Phipps has eliminated junk food and sugary beverages, including soda, which was removed from the café in 2011.

"We believe it is important to walk the talk and be consistent with our values across all of our efforts," says Phipps Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini. "Fortunately, we have a great partnership with Sodexo that enables us to implement the highest standards, and the rave reviews we get as a result prove that it is possible to be responsible while being successful, too. We couldn't be more pleased with this accomplishment."