



Cincinnati Zoo: Much ado about poo!

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CINCINNATI, OH (FOX19) – The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is going for the title of being #1 at #2! Officials at the Zoo say more than 1,100 pounds of elephant and giraffe dung, 900 pounds of Sumatran rhino, camel, takin, red river hog, gazelle and Przewalski's horse droppings and 700 pounds of black and Indian rhino and zebra waste accumulates every single day at the Cincinnati Zoo. That's roughly one million pounds of Zoo Do produced annually.

The Cincinnati Zoo and Marvin's Organic Gardens in Lebanon, Ohio, have joined forces to compost the Zoo's largest source of organic waste – fecal matter and bedding from three herbivore exhibit areas. With 500 tons of waste projected to be recycled in the first year, the Zoo says there are several reasons why they are doing this. First of all, there will be less waste volume and a significant reduction in methane production in landfills from the Cincinnati Zoo. Secondly, the Zoo will save \$5,000-10,000 a year in waste management costs.

"Marvin's Organic Gardens is a great partner for the Zoo. They provide us with over 40 years of composting experience and a team of experts," said Mark Fisher, Senior Director of Facilities & Sustainability at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. "Finding a partner, and getting this project started, was the most logical next step in order for the Cincinnati Zoo to continue to be the Greenest Zoo in America."

The Cincinnati Zoo also received a grant of \$35,000 from the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District to help launch and implement the first year of this project. The grant allowed the Zoo to purchase an all-terrain forklift and seven large scale compost bins, which are being used to move the organic waste from the animal exhibits to the waste-pickup area, within the Zoo.

"Nearly a dozen Zoo keepers, from all three herbivore exhibit areas started this composting program and are responsible for getting the organic waste from the exhibits to the Zoo's service road, where the waste can be dumped into composting bins," said Thane Maynard, Executive Director of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. "This really is a team effort and cannot be successful without the buy-in from everyone within the organization. Fortunately for us, everyone here at the Cincinnati Zoo is committed to being green."

"The Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District is proud to participate in the Zoo's organic waste composting project. We applaud the Zoo's creative solution to recycling this waste stream. By diverting this material from the landfill, the Zoo is helping us reach our recycling goals in Hamilton County," said Holly Christmann, Program Manager of the Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District.

Each week, Rumpke will pick up the organic waste at the Zoo and deliver it to Marvin's Organic Gardens. Marvin's Organic Recycling Center currently receives food waste, paper yard waste, animal manure, and woody materials which they compost into large mounds and let age "like fine wine". These mounds are turned at least 4 times a year to speed up the decomposition process, reduce nutrient loss, and promote the highest quality of compost.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with an organization as treasured as the Cincinnati Zoo," said Wes Duren, Vice President at Marvin's Organic Gardens. "The organic waste material the Zoo is providing is "liquid gold" for our existing compost mounds. Over time this material will be among the best in the region and used not only in the Zoo's gardens, but available for everyone to purchase."

For more information visit Marvin's Organic Gardens, Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District or contact the Cincinnati Zoo at (513) 281-4700.

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