

Nahant Safer Waters in Massachusetts, Inc. (S.W.I.M.) has recently helped the town of Nahant boost Island Gold, its residential one-year free composting program. On August 7, 2024, Nahant's Board of Selectmen allocated \$15,000 to continue subsidizing the popular composting program until the funds run out. The goal is to reach 200 subscribers, up from 151 composters in August 2024, which will lower the annual fee charged by Black Earth Compost, the composting contractor.

The town's generous support pays for one year of composting for residents who are not current customers of Black Earth Compost, and a tax abatement of \$20. SWIM donated \$2,000 to give each new composting family a free stainless-steel countertop container for use in the kitchen. Black Earth Compost supports the Island Gold program by donating the curbside bin, a supply of the necessary compostable bags, and a free bag of compost every year. After the first free year, residents pay \$3.08 per week for composting, which will drop to \$2.69 when the 200-family goal is reached.

Household trash consists of about 30% compostable material by weight, so composting significantly reduces the volume of landfill space, an increasingly rare resource in Massachusetts. It also lowers the local taxes that Nahant residents pay for trash removal, which is billed by weight. Composting keeps sewage water cleaner, as there is less debris coming from kitchen sinks, disposals, and dishwashers. This reduces energy use and costs at sewage treatment plants. Composting also reduces methane emissions, a major contributor to global climate change.

James Hyder, Nahant resident and new composter, states: "Composting through Black Earth is easy: we just put food scraps and other approved waste in the covered kitchen bin, then take the bag out to the curb on Monday nights. No mess and no fuss."

Nahant's Johnson Elementary School has enthusiastically joined the composting movement. The school appreciates not having to keep food waste on site or manage a compost pile, and that they get the finished product for their garden at the end of the season. Just one month into the program, Principal Kevin Andrews said, "Black Earth's composting program is having a very positive impact on our school. Instead of sending it to incinerators where it is released as carbon dioxide, or landfills where it could turn to methane, our students are able to help send it to a farm where it is turned into a valuable soil component."

For more information on the Island Gold composting program and to sign up, go to <https://nahant.org/compost/>

Nahant S.W.I.M., Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit environmental organization founded in 1984 to protect our regional waters, beaches, and land from pollution and other harm. For more information and to contact us, visit <http://www.nahantswim.org>.