

# Growthpoint launches G-Eco waste-to-soil initiative

G-Eco (Growthpoint Eco) is the latest green initiative from Growthpoint Properties, a pilot project that turns the large volumes of food waste generated by client businesses at its properties into compost.

The project is a partnership with Life & Earth and has the potential for massive environmental benefits. It is being tested at Growthpoint Business Park in Midrand using waste produced at four of Growthpoint's large multi-tenant properties in the area.



The idea was born 18 months ago when Growthpoint embarked on a waste management analysis process to measure waste sent to landfills and the effectiveness of its existing initiatives to reduce this. Results revealed that the waste generated by its building users and sent to landfill was substantial.

## Wet waste diversion trial

Knowing that 40% to 60% of landfill waste comes from organic waste from food and garden waste, Growthpoint embarked on a six-month wet waste diversion trial, which started at the beginning of July this year.

“We are converting the wet waste collected at our properties taking part in the trial into compost, which is then used at these properties,” says Werner van Antwerpen, head of sustainability at Growthpoint.

To start the project, driven by Growthpoint’s Industrial Property Division, Life & Earth installed a food waste composting machine at Growthpoint Business Park in Midrand. The plant turns food waste into 100% organic compost and can process up to 1,000kg of food waste each day with the capacity to make about nine tonnes of compost a month.

Then, Growthpoint’s current waste contractors at Growthpoint Business Park, Woodlands Office Park, Woodmead Retail Park and Central Park were trained about the process and how to separate wet waste at source. Growthpoint also worked with its clients at these properties, encouraging them to separate their food waste. The waste is taken to the composting plant at Growthpoint Business Park, where it is processed.

During its first four months of the trial, Growthpoint diverted 16 tonnes of waste from landfill and produced six cubic metres of nutrient-rich soil, which is reapplied at Growthpoint Business Park.

## Positive environmental impacts

The resulting positive environmental impacts are significant when considering that composting food waste on site instead of sending it to landfill reduces CO2e emissions by 332kg per tonne – and this is just the start.



By removing food waste from the waste stream, recyclables increase by about 30%. Composting food waste is also cleaner and healthier as it reduces vermin and rat infestations and removes bad smells from rotting food. Also, it reduces harmful vehicle emissions, with fewer trips now needed to take waste to the dump, and deliver garden compost to the properties.

Importantly, a focus on food waste creates more awareness about the problem and helps clients manage their food costs as they strive to reduce both. The project, therefore, stands to have a direct positive impact of Growthpoint’s clients’ businesses.

Proactive waste management initiatives such as G-Eco have become essential in South Africa. According to Life & Earth, the country sends more than 10.2-million tonnes of food waste to landfill every year, and food waste costs our economy more than R4.6bn annually.

“The G-Eco waste-to-soil project is one component of Growthpoint’s bigger waste management strategy,” explains Van Antwerpen. It already reduces waste through recycling, and plans to ensure all its buildings have onsite recycling by the

end of 2018. Based on the success of the G-Eco pilot, Growthpoint plans to introduce more waste-to-soil plants in other areas of the country where it has clusters of property assets.

“We are excited to find out exactly how much waste-to-landfill we will be able to save with our different waste management programmes, but we are confident that it will be substantial,” says Van Antwerpen. He also notes: “This innovative project contributes to Growthpoint’s environmentally responsible leadership and furthers our sustainable business journey.”

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