

LEADING THE WAY

Stoneleigh G&CC Commits to Zero Food Waste With Bokashi Program

Stoneleigh Golf & Country Club in Round Hill, Virginia – just west of Leesburg on Route 7 – has become the first private club in the Middle Atlantic to commit to a zero food waste initiative by using an innovative type of fermentation composting called Bokashi.

“Between member dining, golf outings and weddings, a private club like Stoneleigh generates tons of food waste annually ... literally tons,” says Damon DeVito managing

year of a demonstration project at Affinity-managed Musket Ridge Golf Club in western Maryland. Musket became the first course in the country to implement a Bokashi zero food waste program last spring in conjunction with the Rock’n’Renew Foundation. Rock’n’Renew’s Jonny Dubowsky, also the co-founder of Greener Planet Group, Inc. says, “Stoneleigh and Affinity are leaders. They ask great questions. This is a big deal.”

That effort was voted “Idea of the Year” by the National Golf Course Owners Association, and it has been strongly supported by customers. Affinity’s DeVito explains, “With the response we have received over the past year, we felt we had no choice but to bring this idea to Stoneleigh. Being the first private club in the Middle Atlantic and only the second in the U.S. can be a bit intimidating, but it’s also energizing.”

Bokashi differs from traditional composting, which is a rotting process; does not accommodate dairy or meat; and can attract animals. Bokashi is a fermentation process and breaks down quickly without need for turning or adding leaves and grass. It is also much easier to sustain in a commercial kitchen because there is no sorting and no odor. “That’s critical,” says DeVito. “It needs to be easily implemented and simple to maintain for an operation like ours. Initially the staff raised eyebrows at the mention of ‘Bokashi’ because it was so unique, but they now embrace the program with pride and keep finding ways to build on it.”

What would have previously been food waste hauled off to a landfill is instead used as compost in a new chef’s garden resulting in fresher herbs in the kitchen, lower food costs, and fewer deliveries. DeVito adds, “This property was an apple orchard at one time. Many apple trees remain. There is an intangible quality about growing your own food that we enjoy sharing with local schoolchildren through educational programs and field trips. So far the kids have learned a lot, but they’ve taught us more.”

director of Affinity Management, which operates the facility. “Membership at Stoneleigh is growing steadily and the numbers of weddings and charitable golf outings are both on track to double this year. Serving those groups generates a lot of waste. This program eliminates all of that waste – including meat and dairy.”

There are hundreds of private golf clubs in the Middle Atlantic, but none has taken this step until now. The program stemmed from the enormous success over the past

