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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 7, 2014

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PUTNAM COUNTY PUSHES FOR MORE COMPOSTING

Brewster, NY—The Putnam County Executive Office and the Department of Health are encouraging residents to take up composting, an easy and convenient way to reduce solid waste, keeping it from landfills and incineration.

“Nearly one-third of garbage could be recycled and reused,” explains County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “Composting is a practical way to handle yard waste and certain types of household waste. The health department aims to make it even easier by providing composting bins at low cost to interested residents. It saves money on peat and fertilizer, and ultimately has the potential to reduce garbage carting fees,” County Executive Odell continued.

“Composted matter can be used as mulch or for soil enrichment, depending on how long it is left to decompose,” adds Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health, Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH). “It’s actually not so much waste material, as it is raw material, great for the vegetable garden and part of an overarching farm-to-table, sustainability plan.”

The whole process is relatively simple. Organic food waste, yard waste and certain types of recyclable paper products are collected and placed in a receptacle. The pile must be kept moist and aerated, which promotes decaying.

Compost piles work best with the right balance of carbon and nitrogen to enhance the bacterial action. Ingredients should include “browns” and “greens,” in composting lingo. Browns provide the

carbon source, and include leaves, straw, wood chips and sawdust; greens provide nitrogen and include fruit and vegetable wastes, coffee grinds, grass clippings and/or manure. It is best to leave meat and dairy scraps out, along with pet waste. The more the pile is turned, the faster it will ready itself.

The PCDOH will have “The Earth Machine” model available (10.5 cubic foot volume) for approximately \$55. (Retail value \$109.) The bin will be on display and pre-orders will be taken at the following upcoming events: Saturday, May 17, at the Master Gardener Plant Sale, 1 Geneva Road, Brewster; Sunday, June 1, at Birds of Prey Day at Green Chimneys, 400 Doansburg Road, Brewster; and July 25, 26 and 27 at the 4-H Fair in Veterans Memorial Park, Carmel. Pre-ordering is necessary. For more information on the PCDOH composting initiative, visit the health department webpage at www.putnamcountyny.gov/health or call the department at 808-1390, extension 43164.

The Health Department’s mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our website at www.putnamcountyny.com/health; or visit our social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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