

Compost

Fact Sheet 1

What is compost?

Compost is a special mixture of organic matter made up of plants and animals. The composting process rots the material and kills bad bacteria. Compost can be added to soil to increase **Soil Organic Matter**.

When organic matter has been made into compost it makes soil healthy - it adds a lot of nutrients, holds water, helps air to flow and improves soil structure. Organic matter needs to be composted before you can use it in your farm or garden.

Compost happens in soil naturally. Compost can be made on farms by using crop remains and other materials in a well-designed composting system.



Types of compost

Mushroom Compost

This is made of mushroom material, poultry litter, horse manure, wheat straw and gypsum. It is high in nutrients and helps build the soil structure.

Garden Organics Compost

This is made from tree trunks, branches, leaves and grass clippings. It holds water in the soil and helps improve the soil structure.

Household Organics Compost

This is made from bread, eggshells, garden litter, garden organics, vegetable and fruit scraps. It is high in nutrients and helps improve the soil structure.

Bio-Solid Compost

This is the dried solid matter from sewerage treatment works that is mixed with soil so it turns into compost. It is very high in nutrients.

Compost

Buying compost

You can buy compost in bags from nurseries, hardware stores, rural traders, council depots and composting businesses.

If you want to buy a lot of compost you can get it from compost suppliers and composting facilities. These are run by some councils and composting businesses. You will find their details under 'Landscape Supplies' in the telephone directory.

Australian Standards

All compost you buy should meet the Australian Standards AS 4454 for Composts, Soil Conditioners and Mulches. The Australian Standard Logo will be on the bag.



When buying compost look for the Australian Standards Logo on the bag.



You can buy two kinds of compost:

1 Composted Soil Conditioner

This is a fine compost that can be mixed into the topsoil. It slowly lets nutrients out, holds water and improves the soil structure.

2 Composted Mulch

This is a coarse compost that can be put on top of the soil. It holds water and helps stop weeds from growing.

For more information contact

Gosford Primary Industries Institute
Industry & Investment NSW
Locked Bag 26 Gosford NSW 2250
ph: 02 4348 1913 fax: 02 4348 1910