

A WORD OF CAUTION

Compost on its own can be too rich for plants. When transplanting or using compost as a growing medium, use no more than 1 part compost to 3 parts of existing soil. It is recommended that newly composted material not be put into direct contact with plant roots as it may still generate heat. Do not put pure compost in the bottom of a hole when transplanting as this can damage shrub and tree roots by burning the root ball.

Using Finished Compost

Garden Beds

Before planting, spread 2 to 3 inches of compost over the top of the garden bed. Work compost into the soils to a depth of 6 inches. At the same time, you can work in some nutrients such as blood meal (nitrogen), bone meal (phosphorus) and potash (potassium).

Potting Soil

Mix 1/3 compost with 1/3 soil and 1/3 vermiculite or sand to create a nutrient rich potting soil.

New Lawns

Spread out 2 inches of compost over the ground surface. Roto-till compost to a depth of 6 inches. Smooth soil surface with a rake and spread seeds or lay down sod.

As a Mulch

Spread compost on top of the ground around the base of trees and shrubs. Spread out as far as the furthest reaching branches (known as the drip line). The mulch will help to retain moisture in the soil and help prevent weed growth and soil compaction.

Top Dressing

Spread up to one inch of screened compost over an existing lawn. The compost will work its way into the existing soil and help to create a healthier soil structure for your lawn. Top dressing can be done at any time, but for best results, top dress after aerating your lawn in the spring.

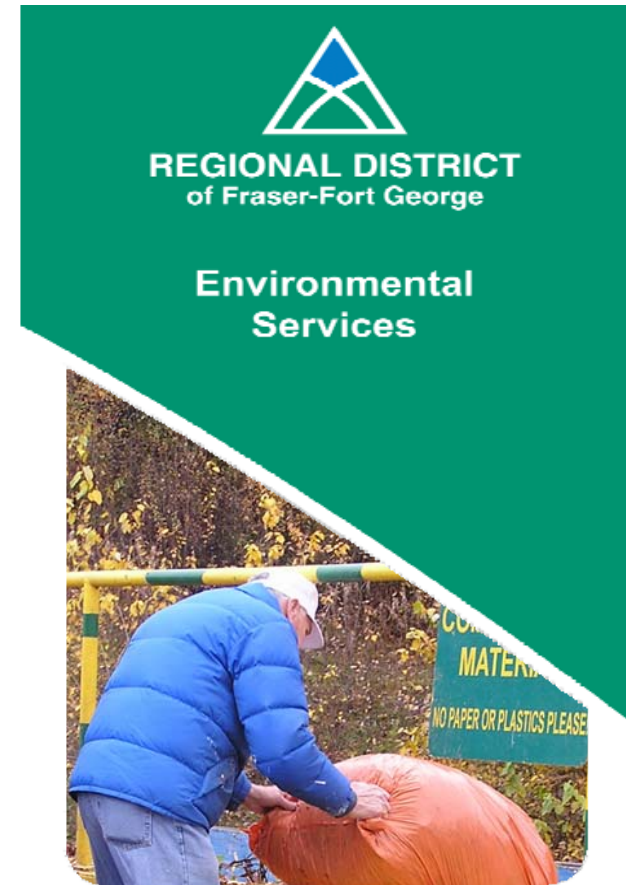
Compost Tea

Put some compost into a burlap sack (or another type of porous textile). Place the sack into a large pail and fill the pail with water. Let the sack and pail sit for a couple of hours – the longer the better. Use the tea to water plants, vegetables or to water unhealthy spots on your lawn.



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COMPOST

What is compost?

Compost is Mother Nature's way of recycling. Composting is a natural process that involves beneficial bacteria, fungi and insects. These busy organisms work hard to transform organic waste material such as leaves, grass clippings and yard trimmings into a dark, nutrient rich soil conditioner.



Compost produced at the Foothills Regional Landfill

Compost available at the Regional District's Foothills Boulevard Regional Landfill Centralized Composting Facility is produced in accordance with the Provincial Organic Matter Recycling Regulation. This compost is classified as Class A compost as it meets the following criteria: the organic material is built into windrows which are periodically aerated and mixed for a period of 35 days. The windrows must maintain a temperature of 55^o Celsius or greater for at least 15 days. After the final aeration and mixing, the compost is held in curing piles for a minimum of 21 days. Once the compost has finished curing, samples are taken, sent to an accredited laboratory and tested for pH, 11 metals, foreign matter and a number of other parameters. For more information on composting regulations, please visit:

www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/mpp/omrreg.html .

Benefits of using compost

When used as a soil amendment, compost is a significant source of organic matter. Organic matter is an important supplier of carbon and a dynamic component in plant/soil interactions. It improves soil and plant efficiency by improving the physical properties of the soil, providing a source of energy to beneficial organisms, and enhancing the reservoir of soil nutrients.

In addition to organic material, compost adds trace elements such as boron, copper, iron, manganese, and zinc to the soil which are required for plant growth. Compost binds these elements and nutrients in the soil ensuring that they are available over a longer period of time for the plants to utilize them.

Compost improves the aeration and drainage of dense (clay) soils and the water-holding capacity and aggregation of sandy soils.

The addition of compost to clay soils helps to increase the variety of particle sizes in the soil structure to overcome the poor growing characteristics associated with clay. This results in increased water movement during wet periods and increases the ability of the soil to retain water during dry spells.

The larger particles also increase air flow through the soil which allows more air to reach the roots. The increased air movement also speeds up soil warming in the spring.

The addition of compost to sandy soils introduces organic material to the high mineral content soil. This addition increases the ability of the soil to retain nutrients. The particle size offered by the compost also helps to increase the ability of the soil to retain water.

Compost aids soil by improving the resistance to wind and water erosion. Adding compost helps prevent wind and water erosion by increasing the availability of water and nutrients to plants resulting in rapid strong plant growth in areas prone to erosion.

