

Compost Benefits & Uses

Compost Benefits

Using compost as mulch, in the soil or as potting media is beneficial in many ways. Compost contains a full spectrum of essential plant nutrients. You can test the nutrient levels in your compost and soil to find out what other supplements it may need for specific plants.

- Compost contains macro and micronutrients often absent in synthetic fertilizers.
- Compost releases nutrients slowly—over months or years, unlike synthetic fertilizers
- Compost enriched soil retains fertilizers better. Less fertilizer runs off to pollute waterways.
- Compost buffers the soil, neutralizing both acid & alkaline soils, bringing pH levels to the optimum range for nutrient availability to plants.

Compost helps bind clusters of soil particles, called aggregates, which provide good soil structure. Such soil is full of tiny air channels & pores that hold air, moisture and nutrients.

- Compost helps sandy soil retain water and nutrients.
- Compost loosens tightly bound particles in clay or silt soil so roots can spread, water drain & air penetrate.
- Compost alters soil structure, making it less likely to erode, and prevents soil spattering on plants—spreading disease.
- Compost can hold nutrients tight enough to prevent them from washing out, but loosely enough so plants can take them up as needed.
- Compost makes any soil easier to work.

Compost brings and feeds diverse life in the soil. These bacteria, fungi, insects, worms and more support healthy plant growth.

- Compost bacteria break down organics into plant available nutrients. Some bacteria convert nitrogen from the air into a plant available nutrient.
- Compost enriched soil have lots of beneficial insects, worms and other organisms that burrow through soil keeping it well aerated.
- Compost may suppress diseases and harmful pests that could overrun poor, lifeless soil.

Healthy soil is an important factor in protecting our waters. Compost increases soil's ability to retain water & decreases runoff. Runoff pollutes water by carrying soil, fertilizers and pesticides to nearby streams.

- Compost encourages healthy root systems, which decrease runoff
- Compost can reduce or eliminate use of synthetic fertilizers
- Compost can reduce chemical pesticides since it contains beneficial microorganisms that may protect plants from diseases and pests.
- Only a 5% increase in organic material quadruples soils water holding capacity.