

COMPOST

fact sheet!



WHAT IS COMPOST?

Compost is a mix of organic and plant materials used as an amendment (or conditioner) for soil and plants. It is a hygienic fertilizer product derived from the recovery of organic material, such as kitchen waste, branches, leaves and yard trimmings.

HOW IS COMPOST PRODUCED?

Although compost can be produced at home, the Town of Mount Royal collects organic waste regularly to make composting easier for residents. The collected waste is sent to a composting facility where it is sorted and shredded. Next, it is separated into piles (windrows) to encourage microbial activity and trigger decomposition. The piles are mixed and turned over periodically to improve aeration. It can take one month to produce an immature compost and from six to twelve months for compost to reach full maturity.

Once the maturation phase is complete, the matter is sifted, then prepared for distribution and use.

WHY SHOULD I COMPOST?

There are a number of great reasons to produce and use compost:

- Composting significantly reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill.
- Compost is rich in nutrients (including nitrogen, phosphorus, iron and manganese) and is a natural way to enrich grass and garden beds.

- Compost balances the soil's pH and improves water retention and soil porosity.
- Compost adds micro-organisms to the soil that play a crucial role in soil fertilization and the elimination of certain contaminants.

HOW DO I USE COMPOST?

The first stage involves core aerating your lawn using a mechanical aerator. Although aerating your soil is optional and not necessary year after year, it is recommended where soil is very compact. Once aeration is complete, compost should be spread evenly with a rake, roughly 1/4" thick (0.6 cm). To avoid suffocating your lawn, make sure compost is not above grass level.

For garden beds, it is best to mix compost with garden soil (1/3 compost to 2/3 garden soil), then spread.



The **Green Line** is your resource for lawn care and landscaping tips and advice.

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