

# **Council Parks & Gardens**

## Compost is the natural, sustainable, low risk way to improve your soils in any landscape.

In general a quality compost product will have been through a full composting process, which involves pasteurisation and microbial transformation for at least 6 weeks. The product will be designed for specific applications and should be supplied with standard product information sheets.



One of the advantages of compost use is its versatility and effectiveness for different applications.

### **Council Parks and Gardens**

Compost can be used in a variety of ways to improve the establishment and management of council parks and gardens, including as mulch, soil replacement and amendments or in landscape containers.

#### **Surface mulching**

Using mulch in parks and gardens has well established benefits, such as reducing erosion, suppressing weeds and improving water conservation. Mulches can drastically reduce water evaporation from the soil surface which often means that less irrigation is required. In mulched areas, fluctuations in soil temperature are also moderated so that plants suffer less stress and will function more efficiently. Applying mulch will also improve soil structure, water holding capacity and the nutrient levels of soils over time, often reducing the need for additional fertiliser applications.

Application: Use fully composted mulches for longer lasting results (up to 3 years) and to avoid the spreading of weeds and diseases such as Dieback. Fully composted mulches are stable products and don't degrade as quickly as those which have only been pasteurised. Apply mulches to a maximum depth of 100mm.

#### Soil replacement and amendment

Garden beds can be difficult to establish on sites where there is little or no topsoil left after construction or excavation. Organic soil or soils blended with composted soil conditioners can be used to replace the topsoil in these situations and improve garden bed establishment. Using compost to replace topsoil also reduces the need for natural soil harvesting. Natural soils are often harvested from river beds, flood plains and other environmentally sensitive areas - recycled organics are a sustainable substitute.

Amending existing soils with compost products is also a great way to improve soil fertility and the ongoing health of parks and gardens. Incorporation of compost into the soil improves soil structure and decreases soil compaction. Compacted soils are prone to water logging, poor plant root penetration, reduced plant growth and erosion. Incorporating compost into compacted soils will improve plant performance and the quality of your parks and gardens. Application for soil replacement: Organic soil or soils blended with composted soil conditioners can be applied up to 150mm deep depending on the condition of the underlying soil profile. If a depth of more than 150mm is required, then overlaying products over a mineral soil with similar soil texture can provide adequate drainage and prevent compost from decaying at depth.

Application for soil amendment: Soil conditioners can be applied and incorporated into the soil up to a maximum of 150L m-2 or to a depth of 150mm.

#### Landscaping containers

Compost can be used in planter boxes and larger landscaping containers to improve moisture retention and decrease the amount of watering required. This can save considerable time and money, particularly if containers are watered manually.

Using potting mixes which contain a proportion of compost materials rather than raw or inorganic materials also has other advantages.

Compost potting mixes....

- will hold more water,
- release nitrogen, potassium and phosphorous,
- release a range of trace elements essential for good plant growth,
- contain bacteria which can suppress plant diseases and reduce the need for chemical treatments, and
- are more stable with little compaction or settling over time.

Using compost products as a component of potting mixes is also more ecologically sustainable than using peat which is mined from sensitive peat bogs and wetland areas.







An initiative of Compost Australia

For more information and a list of quality suppliers, go to

www.compostforsoils.com.au

the resource for compost users