

Compost for Vegetable Growers

Fact Sheet 3: Getting Started



To get the best out of compost, it needs to be used regularly as an integrated part of crop and soil management. Therefore, you need to be clear about what you want the compost to achieve and talk to suppliers about products and methods of using them that will most cost effectively meet your needs.


Use the table below to match your required outcome with the suggested product type (in general terms) and method of application. Detailed advice on product specifications should be supplied by the compost producer.

Desired outcome	Suggested approach
Better soil structure	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost of high organic matter content; Incorporate in soil at planting.
Better soil moisture management	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; To prevent surface evaporation, mulch soil with compost. Incorporate compost to improve soil water holding capacity.
Reduced erosion	To reduce wind erosion, apply compost on soil surface, and if incorporating, only cultivate into the top few centimeters.
Improved crop establishment and growth	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; incorporate into soil at planting - if sand-blasting is a problem, apply compost on soil surface then incorporate into soil after harvest.
Better nutrient management	Regular use of fine grade, mature, high nutrient compost (e.g. manure-based composts or compost/fertiliser blends); apply by banding and incorporate at planting.
Control plant pathogens in soil	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; incorporate into soil at planting.

Sheets in this series

What is compost? 1

Why use compost? 2

 **Getting started** 3

Choosing a supplier 4

Using compost 5



This exercise will go a long way in assisting your compost supplier match both your production goals and target benefits with the best product to achieve them. Some suppliers will provide products at discounted rates to encourage commercial growers to try compost. For further information, contact EcoRecycle Victoria on 9639 3322.

Further information is
available from:

Primary Industries Research
Victoria (PIRVic) Knoxfield
Centre, Private Bag 15,
Ferntree Gully Delivery
Centre, Victoria 3156.
Phone: 03 9210 9222
www.dpi.vic.gov.au

EcoRecycle Victoria
Level 2, 478 Albert St. East
Melbourne Victoria 3002
Phone: 03 9639 3322
www.ecorecycle.vic.gov.au

Department of Agriculture,
Western Australia,
Locked Bag 4, Bentley
Delivery Centre,
Western Australia 6983,
Phone: 08 9368 3333
www.agric.wa.gov.au

ISBN 1 74146 278 9; Set ISBN 1 74146 276 2

© The State of Victoria, Department of Primary Industries, July, 2004.

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.