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**Soil Plus Compost Equals Lush Healthy Plants**

**By James Ellison**

You find that your plants are giving you fits in your landscape because it seems like a parade of weeds, insects or diseases have invaded and taken over. The problem is probably not due to insects or diseases but the poor soil that the plants are in. This poor soil is the major cause of invading insects and/or plant diseases.

With the poor soil comes weak and unhealthy plants that are more likely to get insect or disease problems. By improving the soil with compost, either before or after planting, will create a big difference. Anytime is a great time to add compost.

Compost is made of rich organic matter, which is crucial to growing healthy and fruitful plants. It is the result of a natural process of decay and recycling of materials such as leaves and twigs. In every corner of the world, in every meadow, forest and wetland composting is taking place. By copying this process, our plants will reap the benefits also.

The major benefit of compost is that it binds water and nutrients in reserve, freeing them when plants need it the most. It holds double its weight in water, hence cutting back the need to water and increasing a plants capacity for our dry months.

Utilizing compost is an inexpensive way to better the soil. Compost cuts the need to fertilize since it's rich in plant nutrients and slowly discharges them over time. And by not having to replace plants every year and the costs connected with plants that die because of poor soils.

Humic acid is a plant-growth stimulant found in compost. Vegetable crops tests show that humic acid, even in low concentrations, produces healthy, lush plants.

Creating compost is an easy task. With all of the grass clippings, twigs and leaves from the yard, fall is a good time to make a compost pile. There are several ways to make compost. Even if you buy a compost bin or build one from wood pallets, here are several tips to help you get going.

1. A compost pile should be approximately 3 feet tall and 3 feet wide. This measurement is ideal for

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getting the pile to heat up.

2. All items going into the compost pile should be wet. When the yard waste is dry when added, it will reduce the decomposition process.

3. Layers of the yard waste should be applied, that is, a layer of grass clippings then a layer of leaves and so on.

4. To turn a compost pile is not an absolute necessary task unless you are in a hurry. By turning the compost pile it will accelerate the decomposition process.

5. The finished product compost can be applied to a new or an established garden or landscape. If you are still planning your project, be sure to add plenty of compost onto your soil before you plant. The compost, over time, will integrate itself with your existing soil. Therefore, no need to till or dig up the

place you are improving.

It doesn't make any difference if your soil is sandy, clay, or rock; adding compost will improve it.

To top dress an established landscape, you can add a layer of compost on top of the existing soil. If you have established plants, add 1 – 2 inches of compost all around the plant. The plants will still get the benefits of the humic acid and other important plant nutrients abundantly found in compost.

The plants and landscape will reward you with a lush, healthy growth. Additionally, it will step-up your plants' natural resistance to insects and diseases. This method is nothing but back to basics.

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and for more info dealing

with compost visit

Compost Info

### **What Is Compost And Why Does My Garden Need It?**

**By Anthony Tripodi**

Some people think compost is just a bunch of manure. Others think it's what happens to your body when you die and get buried, "My uncle Joe died last year and his body has been de-compostin' ever since." Compost is defined in the dictionary as "a mixture of decaying organic matter, as from leaves and manure, used to improve soil structure and provide nutrients." That's a great definition but it really

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doesn't tell the whole story. It should say, "Compost is the greatest thing ever!!!" Well the dictionary probably won't ever say that but I will.

Compost is created when yard & food waste decomposes. Micro organisms & invertebrates (also known as little buggers) feed on the waste, live their brief lives, reproduce, die and then they become waste too. This repeating cycle is how the soil gets it's nutrients replenished. Like Mufasa said, "We all have our place in the circle of life." When it comes to compost, it 's just a very small circle.

Compost will happen on it's own without any help from man. Look down at the ground in a dense forest. The leaves fall from the trees and decompose. This creates a rich soil that in turn feeds the trees. Compost just happens naturally and has been since the dawn of time. But man has figured out how to speed up the process. By mixing the right ratio of greens (grass clippings, coffee grinds, food waste, etc) with the right ratio of browns (leaves, hay, shredded newspapers, etc) and keeping the pile moist and well aerated you will create compost much quicker than nature.

Are you still asking what's the big deal about compost? Add some of this stuff to your garden bed and you'll know. Your plants will grow bigger and healthier. Sure you could add fertilizers and get the same results, for now. You see synthetic fertilizers eventually break down and after a few years will leave the soil salty. At some point you won't be able to grow anything without lots of that fertilizer (they planned it that way to sell you more). It's like raising a crack baby at that point. Well maybe not that bad but you get the idea.

Adding compost to the soil is creating healthy soil. You're doing what nature is already trying to do but your just doing it faster and more efficiently.

Compost is not only great for your plants but it's great for your soil and even for the environment. They say that in the United States that 30% of all garbage is lawn and garden waste. Instead of putting those leaves and grass clippings out at the curb they could be composted. That would not only cut down on the space needed in land fills but it would make everyone's gardens grow bigger, healthier and less dependent on synthetic fertilizers.

I've described the benefits of compost and hopefully you're ready to build or buy a compost bin and get started. Remember that nature is going to decompose your yard waste at it's own pace anyway. Why not lend a hand and speed up the process.

Anthony Tripodi is the webmaster of WatchItRot.com – The Compost Guide. For more information about Compost including ideas and equipment, visit

<http://www.watchitrot.com>



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