

Compost Awareness Week

Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group

Compost Awareness Week

The week from May 5th to 12th marks International Compost Awareness Week. This is a great opportunity to better understand the importance of composting both at home and for primary producers.

In Australia around 40% of our household waste is organic, made up of either food waste or garden clippings. There are some very good reasons not to send this to landfill and to compost it instead. When organic material is sent to landfills it is compacted by machinery constantly squashing it in to maximise the space and lifetime of the landfill cell. This compacting has the effect of removing oxygen from the cell and creating what's called an anaerobic environment. When food and garden waste breakdown without oxygen, such as in a landfill, they create methane which can be up to 25 times worse than carbon dioxide as a global warming gas. So best we avoid this outcome and either compost our organic waste at home, or through a council service if one is provided. If using a council service, make sure you follow their guidelines for what type of organics are accepted and do not include materials that would contaminate compost.

Home composting not only reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but the further benefit of providing a valuable resource for our gardens. Compost does two very valuable things, it improves soil health and nutrient levels, and assists in maintaining moisture levels in the soil.

Home composting need not be difficult. Here are some tips to help you along the way:

- Put your compost bin where it is convenient. If it's too far away you might be less inclined to use it.
- Aerate often. This will decrease the time taken to make your compost. You can use a garden fork, spade or a specifically designed corkscrew type tool.
- Avoid thick layers of any single item, especially lawn clippings as it tends to smother the compost.
- A little bit of dolomite lime is inexpensive and can be added if you begin to have any odour issues.
- Brown Autumn leaves are a great addition to home compost.

There is an increasing number of commercial composting facilities in Victoria who are processing the material picked up by council organic collection services. This composted product is providing a great benefit to farmers. Many people on the land are beginning to see the advantages of using compost on farms. They are now able to gain access to bulk amounts of compost which can be applied to paddocks to improve water retention, soil quality and reduce the application of chemical fertilizers.

Composting is a great way to reuse your organic waste and create a product that can be beneficial to your garden and farms.

Caring for our environment by reducing waste to landfill.

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