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Council

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Compost Uses, Markets and the USCC's STA Program – *a brief primer*



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*Seal of Testing
Assurance®*



What is Compost?

Composting is a *Manufacturing* Process

Change your mindset!

**Composters are Product Manufacturers,
NOT Waste Processors!**

Not all composts, however, are created equal!

Know your product!



Compost Uses

Perceived Market Value and Segment Acceptance

- Blended Topsoil Component
- Soil Amendment for Turf Establishment
- Soil Amendment for Planting Beds
- Planting Backfill Mix Component
- Soil Mulch for Erosion Control

- Soil Amendment for Field Nursery Production
- Horticultural Substrate (growing media) Component

- Soil Amendment for Marginal Soils/Reclamation

- Soil Amendment for Silviculture (reforestation)
- Soil Amendment for Vegetable Crop Production
- Growing Media for Sod Production



What compost isn't?

- it isn't black gold
- customers will not be lining up with money in hand
- build it and they will come – NOT
- the environment is nice, but the bottom line is nicer!
- You **MUST** educate your prospects and **SELL** you facility and product!

Compost Customers

Perceived Market Value and Segment Acceptance

- Landscape Suppliers - ALL
- Garden Centers – focus on bulk products
- Landscapers – commercial and residential
- Topsoil Suppliers – commercial and retail
- Retail – Homeowners, packaged product?
- DOT' s/Public Works – local and state

- Greenhouses and Nurseries – may need mixes
- Golf Courses and Athletic Fields – may need mixes
- Organic Farmers – product specific
- Land Reclamation – timing!



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Compost Use in Landscaping

Your #1 Direct Use Market Segment

Landscapers will buy compost directly

Landscapers will buy compost indirectly

Landscapers will buy straight compost

Landscapers will buy compost topsoil mixes

Landscapers will serve as subcontractors

for most construction projects:

commercial, residential, public works,

highway, etc.



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Soil Amending – 2” of compost creates soil!





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NO specialized Equipment!





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Transform ANY soil type into topsoil!





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‘Manufacturing’ Topsoil with Compost





Backfill Mixes





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Mulching with Compost





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Topdressing with Compost





**Soil Mulch
for
Erosion Control**





AASHTO Specifications

**American Association of State Highway
and Transportation Officials**

**444 North Capitol Street N.W., Suite 249
Washington, D.C. 20001**

**Standard
Specifications for:**

**Compost for Erosion/Sediment Control
Compost Blanket AND Compost Berm**



Professional Growers Greenhouses and Nurseries

Proceed SLOWLY and CAUTIOUSLY!

- **VERY** conservative market segment
- **Most expensive legal crop/acre grown**
 - **Compost product must be VERY consistent, even if it's consistently bad!**
- **Start small – 10% - 15% by volume**
- **1 failure will undo 100 successes!**



Specifiers – the master key to increased sales!

- **Specifiers are primarily landscape architects, landscape designers and consulting engineers**
- **They dictate what is used on landscape projects**
- **They work for commercial projects, DOTs and residential projects**
- **If it ain't in the specs, it may not be used!**



The USCC's STA program is a national compost testing and labeling program designed to:

- **To improve customer confidence in compost selection and utilization**
- **To improve overall customer satisfaction, as well as 'field' results**
- **To improve compost purchasing decisions**
- **To promote customer-oriented composters**
- **To make compost the mainstream horticultural product that it should be and to help raise the level of professionalism of composters**

If it isn't STA Compost..... What is it?



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NEW Consumer Compost Use Program 1st National Compost Standards Program!

trees & shrubs



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flower & vegetable GARDENS



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lawn



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Seal of Testing Assurance Program

Program 'Stats' – 10/17/11

- Companies in the STA Program = 172
- Compost Products in the STA Program = 224
- Compost volume in the STA Program =
Approx. 3.2 million tons, or
Approx. 6.4 million cubic yards
- States with STA participants = 34
- Labs in STA Program = 12
- DOTs specifying STA ONLY - 6