



Show Notes

Commercial compost has the potential to transform the future of landscaping projects across the property and infrastructure sectors.

What is commercial compost?

Commercial compost is made from food and organics (FOGO) waste, collected through kerbside bin services.

It can improve soil health, grow healthier plants, and increase water efficiency and climate resilience, all while helping meet sustainability targets.

Episode 3: Compost for landscapers and urban designers

Whether you're a landscape designer, project developer or town planner, using compost is a long-term investment in the health and productivity of landscape design.

In the third episode in the Cool Compost series we talk to an environmental consultant about how compost can improve your project's overall sustainability rating. And we hear from a housing developer that's leading the way in sustainable suburbs.

Better soils, healthier landscapes

When applied to land, commercial compost can improve poor quality and compacted soils, helping to establish new sites more rapidly and improving plant health and growth. It helps to regenerate natural systems.

This means compost can play an important role in the success of landscaping projects, making them lower maintenance and more cost-effective.

Increased water efficiency

Compost can also increase water efficiency. It improves the structure of soil and can improve water retention by up to three times more than standard practices. So, sites are more resilient and require less irrigation, saving time and money.

Compost is part of a future solution as businesses and organisations seek to adapt to a changing climate and increasing pressure on water resources.



Sustainability targets and ratings

The use of commercial compost can help boost environmental and sustainability targets. This is particularly important when it comes to meeting leading sustainability ratings, including:

- the Infrastructure Sustainability Council's IS Rating Scheme
- the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star rating system.

Commercial compost can also help you meet procurement targets for recycled content.

Compost trial shows good results

Edge Environment received an Organics Market Development Grant from the NSW Environment Protection Authority to conduct a compost trial on an infrastructure development site.

In areas where compost was applied, the plant death rate was only 2% to 4%, depending on the amount of compost applied. This compared to a 22% plant death rate in the control area using business-as-usual practices, with no compost applied.

“There was a real visual difference in the plant health and the vigorous nature of the plants themselves.

It was really quite obvious what the compost was doing.”

- Mike Twemlow, Sustainability Consultant,
Edge Environment

Increasing climate resilience

With its capacity to strengthen the soil and increase plant resilience, compost can reduce climate risk and help create an environment that is better able to cope with climate change and drought.

Widespread use of compost also helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That's because when food and garden organics waste goes to landfill (instead of being recycled), it produces methane – a potent greenhouse gas.

So, by including compost in landscaped areas and green spaces, you can play a crucial role in diverting this valuable resource from landfill and reduce emissions.

Compost also has the added benefit of being able to be locally sourced. And it can reduce the reliance on expensive and imported synthetic fertilisers and pesticides.

Sustainability showcase: Landcom's Compost Revolution



Paul Himberger, Sustainability and Research Manager, Landcom. Photo: EPA.

Landcom, the NSW Government's land and property development organisation, is an industry leader with strong credentials in sustainability.

From this unique position, it is well placed to trial new approaches, like compost, and demonstrate the benefits to others.

With a remit to deliver affordable housing, Landcom is always looking for the most cost-effective ways to achieve this. Paul Himberger, Landcom's Sustainability and Research Manager said: “Using compost in infrastructure projects has immediate benefits across water, waste, biodiversity and carbon neutrality, and it also improves our response to climate risk.”

Be a circular economy leader

As NSW transitions to a circular economy, more and more food and garden organics waste is being diverted from landfill.

And, with the NSW Government's target for all households and select businesses to recycle food and garden organics waste by 2030, the availability of quality commercial compost is set to grow.

By using compost and encouraging communities to compost their food waste, your business or organisation can lead the way in circular economy innovation.



Mike Twemlow, Sustainability Consultant, Edge Environment. Photo: EPA.

What to look for when buying compost

Quality is vital. Make sure any compost you buy complies with Australian Standard AS4454 (Composts, soil conditioners and mulches) and **NSW Resource Recovery Exemptions**. This will ensure your compost is good quality and free from contaminants.

Soil testing is also important, as every soil needs different nutrients. Compost can be made to suit requirements, so be sure to first request a site visit and consultation with your compost supplier.

About the program

The Cool Compost program showcases the results of the NSW Environment Protection Authority's Waste Less, Recycle More Organics Market Development grants program. The information provided in these show notes is based on evidence and results of the grant projects and activities.

More information

To find out more about the Infrastructure Sustainability Council's IS Rating Scheme visit iscouncil.org

To find out more about the Green Building Council of Australia's Green Star rating system visit new.gbca.org.au

The Australia Organics Recycling Association is the peak industry body for compost processors aora.org.au

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