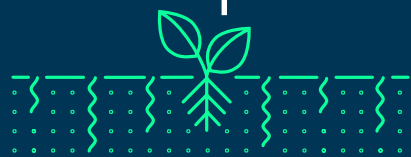


Cool Compost



Show Notes

The commercial compost industry is set to grow after the NSW Government set a target for all households to have kerbside food and organics waste collection by 2030. This will create a plentiful supply for state government agencies looking to boost their use of recycled content.

What is commercial compost?

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

This material is turned into compost at commercial composting facilities. There are different methods of composting and all speed up the natural decomposition of materials into nutrient rich matter.

Episode 5: Compost for government agencies

Commercial compost is currently used for a wide variety of purposes – across development and infrastructure, for urban greening, building better roads, and for sporting fields and parks.

Purchasing and using compost improves soil health and productivity, and provides cost-effective solutions for businesses and government agencies looking to reduce their waste and carbon footprint.

In the final episode of the Cool Compost series, we talk to a government representative and the organics recycling industry about what's on the horizon for compost, and hear about a case study that increased awareness and uptake of compost in roadside rehabilitation.

Increasing recycled products in procurement

Using compost can help government agencies achieve the recycled product procurement requirements set out in the NSW Government's Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy, which requires agencies to use recycled content on an 'if not, why not' basis.

Compost made from FOGO waste is fully recycled, so any agency with a role in soil health, rehabilitation or revegetation can benefit from this growing market.

The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) can help agencies to understand where compost might fit in with their procurement guidelines, what they need to know as customers, and how they can use it to meet their recycled content targets.



Compost blanket project. Photo: EPA.

Driving a circular economy

Compost generated from food and garden organics is a perfect example of circularity because it returns nutrient-rich resources back to the land and regenerates our environment.

Using compost reduces waste, water use and stormwater pollution. It creates healthier green spaces, boosts opportunities for carbon sequestration and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

So, by using and encouraging procurement of commercial compost, government agencies can divert valuable resources from landfill and help reduce emissions.

‘As we move increasingly into a circular economy, and with the government’s commitments for net zero emissions, compost made from kerbside food and garden waste is the ultimate in recycled product and the ultimate in circularity.’

- Amanda Kane, Organics Manager, NSW EPA

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.

Showcase of success: Compost Blanket



Penelope Smith, horticulture soil scientist.

The NSW EPA’s Organics Market Development grants program funded 38 ground-breaking projects demonstrating the benefits of compost across a range of industries, with the aim of creating strong markets for the increasing supply of compost made from kerbside FOGO waste.

One such case study was the compost blanket project, delivered by Hills Bark Blower and Penelope’s Garden.

Extensive research has shown the effectiveness of compost blankets for erosion control, revegetation on new and existing roadsides and the rehabilitation of mining sites.

The project was unique in that it brought the construction and roadway professionals who were specifying and buying compost, or ordering it through procurement, on site to see compost blankets being installed and inspect the positive results first hand.

A compost blanket is a humus layer applied to sloping sites or roadside batters to hold the soil underneath in place. After it’s watered, the blanket adheres to the contours of the slope to hold everything in place. As well as stopping erosion, the blanket also provides a ready-made growing medium for seeds and plants.

'The opportunity to use recycled organics and compost in the rehabilitation sector is just huge. We have roadways being built, we have mining sites being decommissioned, that's where compost blankets and recycled organics can come into it.'

- Penelope Smith, horticulture soil scientist



Construction and roadway professionals attend a compost blanket demonstration. Photo: The Hills Bark Blower.

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 watch the video and listen to the podcast, visit circularag.com.au/compost

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

For more information about compost blanket visit scapeworksaustralia.com.au

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