



## How to use compost

Compost is used to enhance soil by mixing into the soil or as a top dressing. **Compost is not a replacement for soil.**

**Existing flower beds:** Add about 1/2" of compost as a top dressing. If adding mulch, apply compost first, then cover with mulch. If last year's mulch is still in place, remove it, add a layer of compost, then re-apply the mulch. Water until the entire root zone is saturated.

**New beds:** Add 2" of compost and mix to at least a 1 foot depth. Although compost is beneficial whenever it is added to soil, for the best results, add your compost about 4 weeks before planting. This will give the compost some extra time to boost the level of beneficial organisms in your soil, energizing plant growth.

**Vegetable gardens:** Apply about 3/4" of compost as a top dressing, either before or after planting. For best results, apply the compost at least 4 weeks before planting. You can also put a bit of compost in the hole you make when you plant your seedlings.

**New lawns:** Apply 2" of compost and mix thoroughly and uniformly to a depth of 1 foot before you sod or seed your lawn. Water thoroughly. As with gardens, you will get the best results if you apply the compost at least 4 weeks before seeding.

**Established lawns:** Aerate the entire area before topdressing. Rake 1/2" of compost evenly over the area. Water thoroughly. For best results, apply in early spring or fall.

**Mulching around trees:** Blend 1 part compost to 4 parts wood chip mulch. For best results, apply in early spring or fall. Always arrange the mulch so that water flows away from the tree trunk.

**Tree planting:** Dig a hole about 5 times the diameter of the root ball of the tree. Before planting, mix 1 part compost and 6 parts original soil and mix thoroughly outside of the hole. Place the tree in the hole and use the compost-soil mixture as backfill around the root ball. Water thoroughly. For best results, apply a compost-wood chip mixture as a mulch around the tree (see above).

*Information provided by [compost.org](http://compost.org)*



## Turning food and yard waste into quality compost

### Thank you for using your green cart!

By composting your food and yard waste, Calgarians have seen a 50% decrease in the amount of black cart waste going to landfill, and The City of Calgary has been able to produce a nutrient-rich compost for use in our community.

### What is compost?

Compost is a soil amendment that helps to improve the health of lawns, flower beds and gardens. Compost is 100% natural and made up of the food scraps, leaves, branches and yard waste collected through the Green Cart program.

The compost may contain food allergens, and adverse reactions may occur in sensitive persons. To reduce risk, wear a dust mask and protective gloves. If skin contact occurs, wash with soap and water. If an allergic reaction occurs, seek medical attention.

#### Benefits of compost

- Enhances soil structure.
- Increases soil nutrient content.
- Uses less water through greater moisture retention.
- Improves plant health.

**Compost must be mixed with soil – it is not a replacement for soil.**

## Green Cart compost is lab-tested and safe to use

### Green Cart compost is lab-tested Category A compost

Finished compost can be applied to the soil in many different ways such as a soil amendment (mixing into the soil) or as a top dressing/mulch (spread compost on top of the soil where it will be incorporated over time). Use on lawns, flower beds, vegetable gardens, trees and shrubs.

## Using your green cart the right way

The food and yard waste you put in your green cart has a direct impact on the quality of the compost that is produced. Follow these tips to help make the highest quality compost possible:

- Use only certified compostable bags or newspaper lining in your kitchen pail. Do not use plastic bags as they do not break down and contaminate the finished compost.
- Remove fruit and vegetable stickers from peels and rinds before composting.
- Remove food from packaging before putting food scraps in the green cart. This includes plastic containers, glass jars, plastic bags, twist ties, elastics, plastic cutlery and straws.

For more Green Cart program tips, visit [calgary.ca/greencart](http://calgary.ca/greencart).