

How to Prepare Compost for Nursery Use

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The nursery soil is steadily being depleted of the essential plant nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and other elements in the form of compounds by the growing plants. It is apt to deteriorate if the loss of these essential nutrients is not replaced and balanced by the application of fertilizers. It is not sufficient, however, to add plant nutrients from commercial fertilizers to the soil without regard to its physical condition. Humus, composed of decayed organic matter is not only a good source of plant nutrients but if used in adequate amount will make the soil rich and physically fit for plant growth. The original material for compost may be barnyard manure, green matter such as leaves, vegetable tops, grasses and even weeds, or anything that has lived and died.

A compost made up of barnyard manure may be made by stacking alternate layers of about twelve centimeters of good ordinary garden soil (clay loam) and barnyard manure until the pile is from one to two meters high. Small amount of slake lime may be added to hasten decomposition and prevent the loss of nitrogen during fermentation. The width and length of the pile depends upon the availability of material. When the pile is completed, the top should be concave so as to hold water that will soak into the different layers. Too much water, however, should be avoided as the essential plant nutrients may be leached out. In order to prevent this, a roof may be built over the pile during the rainy season and removed during the dry season. Every four to five months, the pile should be spaded vertically and restocked to blend

the soil and the manure. The compost should be ready in about two years.

Compost made up of vegetable remains may be prepared by piling the material in the following order: (1) layer of about fifteen centimeters of well compacted green matter. This may consist of leaves, twigs, grasses, or weeds; if grasses and weeds are used, they should be gathered before they bear seed; (2) layer of loam of about five to seven centimeters thick; (3) a thin layer of chicken droppings, horse or cattle manure. This may be followed by a thin layer of slake lime to counteract acidity in the pile. The performance is repeated on the pile until it is about one or two meters high. The width and length of the pile depend upon the availability of material. At the very top of the pile is a layer of from ten to fifteen centimeters thick of loam soil a bit lower at the center than the outer reaches in order to allow water to soak the layers and encourage decomposition. After four to five months, the pile is spaded vertically to blend the soil and the partially decomposed organic matter and then restocked again. This will also insure the penetration of oxygen into the pile which is essential for satisfactory decomposition. The compost should be ready for use when it is pretty well decayed. The organic matter is converted into compost by a number of microscopic organisms like fungi, bacteria, protozoa and other minute organisms and activities of other creatures the most important of which is the earthworm.

Sometimes a shallow pit is built at the edge of the nursery and used for piling the
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ings is expected to get under way in the near future.

It is realized that the full effectiveness of the work of the Bur. of Forestry is in many ways handicapped through lack of sufficient appropriations. Travel allowances of field personnel are inadequate to safeguard properly the forests from illegal exploitation. Much timber is destroyed without financial benefit to the Government because of itinerant squatters on public forest lands. We in the MSA are cognizant of these conditions and wish to offer every assistance to the Bureau of Forestry in furthering their correction. The Bureau of Forestry has a large responsibility in serving as the official custodian for the protection and wise use and management of the forest wealth of this country. The effectiveness of that 'stewardship' has a most definite bearing on the Philippine economy both today and on down the years. This responsibility, it is believed, could very well be shared in greater degree with the public through special organized channels for dispensing information. The Bureau of Forestry has a "real story to tell" and one that with the help of a better informed public can go far toward alleviating financial anxieties concerned with the bureau's administration activities.

The secret of life is not to do what you like, but to like what you do.

—World Treasury of Proverbs

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If someone betrays you once, it's his fault. If he betrays you twice, it's your fault.

—Rumanian Proverb

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He who marries might be sorry. He who does not will be sorry.

—Czechoslovakian Proverb

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material for compost. This has the advantage of the pile not to erode at the sides and scatter but the big drawback is the inconvenience of spading to blend the material and removing the humus once ready for use.

The temperature in the Philippines is fairly high throughout the years to favor the development within the pile of the organisms which are essential in good humus formation. The most important factor to control is moisture within the pile. The pile should be kept moist at all times, a condition which will not only favor the development of bacteria and other organisms but also encourage decomposition. During the rainy season, there is not much need of spraying except of course during the spell of prolonged dry weather. During the dry season, occasional spraying is necessary in order to keep the pile moist.

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