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THE WORKING WITH SERIES 03

WORKING WITH & UNDERSTANDING COMPOST

ACTUAL IMAGE FROM OUR OWN GROW TEST:
BASIL DIRECT PLANTED IN OUR SCREENED DAIRY MANURE COMPOST FROM SEED AFTER 30 DAYS.

WOULD A COMPOST BY ANY OTHER NAME SMELL AS SWEET???

The famous Shakespeare phrase "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" simply means that the name of a thing cannot affect what it actually is. A rose is going to smell like a rose no matter what you call it. You might think that the same would be true of compost, but not all composts are created equally. They may smell similar but more importantly they will not contain the same Ph, macro, and micro nutrients levels. In this brief handout we hope to define a few things about compost and add some knowledge to those who are looking to learn more about composts since they are not all created equally, and since we've got more than a few options here at Texas Sand & Gravel!

TYPES OF COMPOST

As we have already stated, compost can come in any number of forms. The most common forms in the Dallas/Fort Worth area are Food Waste based, Green Waste based, and Livestock Waste based. So lets look at each of these:

Food Waste based Compost is derived from things like your favorite sports drinks or soda after these products expire. They are hauled to recycling facilities where containers are emptied (and recycled) and the liquids from these products are mixed in with mulches and leaves. At a good facility, these huge rows of material are continually turned allowing oxygen to enter in to the mixture. As with all composts, the temperatures are constantly monitored as the products break down and end product is tested to ensure that it has achieved maturity. While you may or may not think this sounds crazy, this practice is fairly common in the greater Dallas/Fort Worth area as there are numerous bottling distributors that deal with expired product. It is also an extremely safe product to use as any reputable facility will have their compost tested and certified by the US Composting Council. Materials are tested for both Macro and Micro nutrients as well as all types of contaminates, ensuring the safe use of the product. While compost made using this method is not classified as 100% organic, the fully matured product is completely broken down into nutrient rich material that is safe for direct planting.

LANDSCAPERS BLEND

Green Waste based Compost is just that, only green waste like trees and brush. These materials are ground up into shavings and finer green

COMPOST BASED SOILS

SCREENED DAIRY MANURE COMPOST is a 100% organic compost that yields almost unbelievable results.

50/50 COMPOST AND TOPSOIL BLEND is an incredible, rich blend of our Screened Dairy Manure Compost and rich sandy loam topsoil.

LANDSCAPERS BLEND is a blend of food waste compost or green waste compost, sand, and pine bark mulch. Great for flowerbeds as well as raised garden beds that need drainage.

ENRICHED TOPSOIL is a 60/40 blend of green waste compost and sand. Great for topping lawns, seeding, and sodding.

90/10 SCREENED TOPSOIL BLEND is a 90% blend of native brown topsoil, sand, and silt with 10% Food Based compost. Great for low spots in lawns, seeding or sodding.

TESTING DATA IS AVAILABLE ON EACH OF OUR PRODUCTS

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waste which are then introduced in to mulches, leaves and the like. Just as is the process with the Food Based Compost, the materials are also turned continually allowing oxygen to enter the process. The compost process is also closely monitored ensuring that the microorganism process is successful. At any reputable facility Green Waste Composts will also be tested periodically, usually no less than every three months, and will be certified by the US Composting Council. This compost will also be tested for all macro and micro nutrients as well as any contaminates. Typically this is going to be a 100% organic material.

Finally, the **Livestock Waste based Compost** can be made from chicken, goat, and cow manure to name a few. Livestock manure is considered 100% organic. These composts tend to be more nutrient rich from our experience (and as you can see from the pictures below). Animal Waste based Composts go through the same rigorous processes that were listed for both the Food Waste based Compost as well as the Green Waste based Compost. These composts are tested and submitted to the US Composting Council to be a certified under their guidelines by any reputable facility. The compost should be fully matured and ready for direct planting or ready to till in to existing soil as an amendment. A common misconception with a material like this is that it will smell like manure. The truth is that a fully mature compost, no matter the base of the compost, should not contain any type of strong odor. A strong odor will either mean that the compost has not matured or that the material simply needs to be turned to allow more oxygen into the mixture as it will always continue to break down at some level.

SCREENED DAIRY MANURE COMPOST

SOME QUICK TIPS

- A mature compost is safe for seeds to be planted directly in to.
- You can use compost as a soil amendment to till into existing soils.
- Even though compost is nutrient rich, with new plants, you will often still need to use a fertilizer to replenish the nutrients that are robbed from the compost, especially as smaller plants take root that do not have complex root systems. Typically, we have seen this be a nitrogen rich supplement.
- Buying in bulk is drastically cheaper than buying bags at a box store!
- Yes, our Screened Dairy Manure Compost is incredible.

NOW... WHICH COMPOST?

With all of this information, what should you do? Our recommendation is to ask questions. Ask questions to make sure you get a compost that is nutrient rich, healthy, and specific for the purpose that you need. Ask for testing data so that you can verify the Ph, macro, and micro nutrient levels. Some compost producers will blend portions of different composts while you are thinking you are getting something from a different base process. Ask questions to find out if anything is blended or if it is a straight compost of a certain process. We would also recommend that you ask to see if they do regular grow tests to make sure the materials and processes that are in place are producing quality results. A compost by any other name, would smell as sweet (or composty) but there is definitely a lot that goes into the composting process!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

If you still have questions, our team is here to help at Texas Sand & Gravel! Give us a call or reach out on Facebook so that we can help you find what you need! Our contact info is on the front!

THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING, I MEAN, COMPOST...

The pictures below from our grow tests speak for themselves. **Both plants were planted on the same day from seeds and both of the photos below were taken on the same day after 30 days!** On the left we have used a competitors compost. On the right we used our Screened Dairy Manure Compost (which by the way also out performed every compost we tried). Screened Dairy Manure Compost is like gold... Compost gold that is!