

## Compost for Vegetable Growers

### Fact Sheet 3: Getting Started



**T**o get the best out of compost, it needs to be used regularly as an integrated part of crop and soil management. Therefore, you need to be clear about what you want the compost to achieve and talk to suppliers about products and methods of using them that will most cost effectively meet your needs.

**U**se the table below to match your required outcome with the suggested product type (in general terms) and method of application. Detailed advice on product specifications should be supplied by the compost producer.

Desired outcome	Suggested approach
Better soil structure	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost of high organic matter content; Incorporate in soil at planting.
Better soil moisture management	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; To prevent surface evaporation, mulch soil with compost. Incorporate compost to improve soil water holding capacity.
Reduced erosion	To reduce wind erosion, apply compost on soil surface, and if incorporating, only cultivate into the top few centimeters.
Improved crop establishment and growth	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; incorporate into soil at planting - if sand-blasting is a problem, apply compost on soil surface then incorporate into soil after harvest.
Better nutrient management	Regular use of fine grade, mature, high nutrient compost (e.g. manure-based composts or compost/fertiliser blends); apply by banding and incorporate at planting.
Control plant pathogens in soil	Regular use of fine grade, mature compost; incorporate into soil at planting.

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This exercise will go a long way in assisting your compost supplier match both your production goals and target benefits with the best product to achieve them. Some suppliers will provide products at discounted rates to encourage commercial growers to try compost. For further information, contact EcoRecycle Victoria on 9639 3322.

Further information is available from:

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