

# Compost Use for Improved Soil

## What is Compost?

An organic matter resource that has the unique ability to improve the chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of soils.



## Put Your Beds to Bed



Cover your beds with 2-3 inches of compost and rake smooth.

Compost absorbs excess water, rather than allowing pooling on top of the soil.



Consistently adding organic matter is one of the best things you can do for your soil

## For a fruitful garden in the spring, apply compost in the fall

- The compost will act as a mulch for your garden soil, helping to slow the leaching of nutrients during winter months. As rain or snow fall on the beds, nutrients from this new top layer will work their way down into the soil and help prevent nutrients in the lower strata from being washed away.
- Fall application provides extra time for the compost to transition into humus as soil microbes work on incorporating the compost. This leads to better soil structure and higher nutrient levels come spring.
- A good layer of compost enhances erosion control and moisture holding capacity.
- Compost can help adjust the pH of your soil to enhance nutrient absorption by plants.
- If your compost is only partially decomposed, putting it on empty beds in the fall will let it fully decompose through the winter and will also keep weeds from emerging.

There's a tremendous amount of root growth in the winter in trees, shrubs, grasses and perennial fruits and vegetables. Topdressing those roots with compost gives them added nutrients.



Closely surround any fall or over-wintering crops that are still in your beds



Surround your grapevines with compost after harvest but before the ground freezes. The nutrients and soil microbes contained in compost will have time to be incorporated into the soil before winter and will be available to the vine in the spring

Find your compost here: <http://compost.css.cornell.edu/maps.html>

An existing lawn top-dressed with a ½" layer of compost every year or two will be healthier than an unamended lawn. Fall is the best time to apply compost



Raking the compost across the lawn



One year later

