

# Consumer Compost Use Program

## LAWN CLASS

### ESTABLISHMENT & MAINTENANCE



The US Composting Council has developed the Consumer Compost Use Program to provide the consumer with an easy to use guide for compost application on the home garden and landscape. Use of this product meets the acceptable parameter range for home lawn use. Look for the Consumer Compost Use Program icons for other applications of compost use. For more information please go to [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)

**Soil Analysis:** A soil analysis should be completed by a reputable laboratory to determine any nutritional requirements, pH, and organic matter adjustments that may be necessary. Once these are determined, the soil can be appropriately amended to a range suitable for the particular turf type in your area. A list of state agricultural cooperative extension labs can be found at: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>

## Applications

**Establishment:** Compost should be uniformly applied over the entire area at an average depth of 1-2 inches and then incorporated to a depth of 6-8 inches using a rotary tiller or other similar equipment. Higher application rates of compost may be used if the compost is incorporated to a greater depth. Rake soil surface smooth prior to seeding, planting or sodding. Always seed, plant or sod during the recommended period of time in your region. The soil surface should be free of large clods, roots, stones, and other material that will interfere with planting and maintenance. The amended area should be watered thoroughly after seeding, sodding or planting.

**Maintenance:** Annual topdressing of a finer grade compost (1/4 – 3/8" screened) is a good maintenance practice on both cool and warm season lawns. This can be done before or after core aeration to reduce compaction and improve moisture holding capacity. Drag or rake compost into the aeration holes. Cool season lawns can be compost topdressed in the early spring or fall. It's best to apply compost to warm season lawns in the spring just prior to the active growing season. The area should be watered thoroughly after seeding.

**Note:** *The nutrients contained in compost should be considered when applying fertilization. They will typically offset plant nutrient requirements, thereby potentially reducing fertilizer application rates.*

**Disclaimer:** The USCC makes no warranties regarding this product or its contents, quality, or suitability for any particular use. Please refer to the individual producer's product label for specific use instructions.

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# Product Parameters

## Compost Parameters for Lawn Use

| Parameter                               | Unit                                   | Range        |               | Notes  |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|--|
|   |  | Preferred    | Acceptable    |  |
| Stability                               | mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C per g OM per day | <2           | <4            | The lower the number, the more completely composted the product.   |
| Maturity                                | % seed emergence & vigor               | 90-100       | 80-100        | The higher the percentage, the more versatile the product.   |
| Moisture Content                        | % wet weight basis                     | 40-50%       | 35-65%        | Products with higher moisture contents may be used. They may simply be more difficult to spread.   |
| Organic Matter Content                  | % dry weight basis                     | 35-60%       | 25-65%        | Creating a soil containing 5% – 10% organic matter is desirable in typical, well drained soils.  |
| Particle Size                           | Screen size to pass through            | 3/8"         | 1/2"          | Compost topdressing should be screened through a 1/4" - 3/8" screen, depending on grass mowing height.   |
| pH                                      | pH units                               | 6.0-7.5      | 5.5 – 8.5     | Modify soil pH with lime, etc., if necessary, based on soil testing results.   |
| Soluble Salts (Electrical Conductivity) | dS/m (mmhos/cm) dry weight basis       | Maximum of 5 | Maximum of 15 | Keep in mind that most soluble salts are also plant nutrients. Compost containing a higher soluble salt content should be applied at lower application rates, and 'watered in' well. |
| Physical Contaminants*                  | % dry weight basis                     | <0.5%        | <1%           | Small stones may be deemed more acceptable than man-made inerts (e.g., plastic)  |

\*All federal and state standards related to biological and chemical contamination must also be met.

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