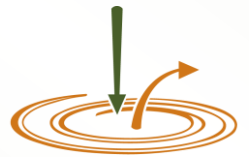


Lesson 11: Compost Marketing

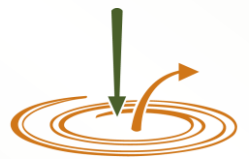
Learning Objectives:

- Know the environmental, soil, and plant benefits of compost
- Be familiar with compost's primary markets
- Understand the major steps to develop a compost marketing program



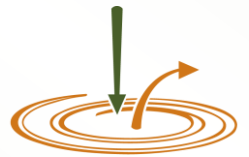
Benefits of Compost

- Provides organic matter and nutrients
- Increases soil moisture holding capacity
- Moderates soil pH
- Reduces erosion and increases water infiltration
- Reduces nutrient loss from chemical fertilizers
- Slowly releases nutrients as plants need them
- Improves soil ecology
- All of these mean more vigorous and healthy plants



Compost: Soil Amendment or Fertilizer?

- Compost has very low nutritive value, typically in range of 1-1-1 NPK
- Its market value is based on how it improves overall soil quality and plant health/growth



Optimal Soil Characteristics

	Optimal Soil
Organic Matter	4% - 8%
pH	6.5 – 7.5
Sand-silt-clay content	40-40-20
Pore Space	10%

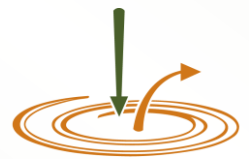
Common Florida Soils:

Spodosols: high sand, hardpan, low organic matter, acidic

Entisols: high sand or clay, undeveloped, low organic matter

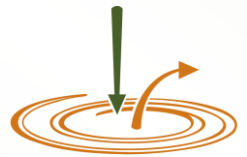
Alfisols: high clay, hardpan, low organic matter, acidic or basic

Ultisols: high clay, low organic matter, acidic



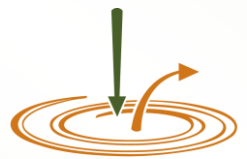
Major Categories of Compost Use

- Landscapers
- Nurseries
- Topsoil Blenders
- Departments of Transportation
- Golf Courses
- Environmental Protection
- Agriculture
- Retail



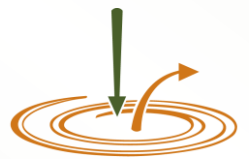
Market Character Matrix

Market	Size	Value	Compost Quality	Effort to Develop
Landscape	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Nursery	Moderate	Moderate-High	High	High
Topsoil Blending	Large	Low	Low	Low-Moderate
DOT	Large	Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate
Golf Course	Small	High	High	High
Environmental	Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	High
Agriculture	Large	Low	Low-Moderate	High
Retail (bagged)	Large	High	High	High



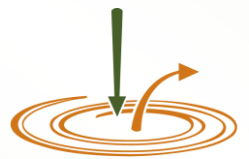
Typical Landscape Usage

- Soil amendment:
 - 1 to 2 inches of compost tilled into the topsoil to improve soil quality
- Mulch:
 - 4 to 6 inches of coarse-textured compost applied to protect root zone



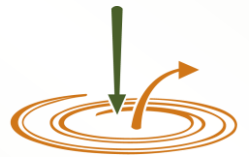
Typical Nursery Usage

- Container mix:
 - 10%-30% compost in potting soil mix, depending on plant needs
- Bedding plants
 - 1 to 2 inches of compost tilled into the topsoil to improve soil quality
- Field-grown plants:
 - 2 inches of compost tilled in strips between rows



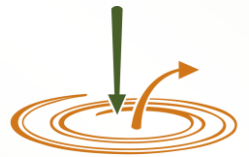
Typical Topsoil Blending Usage

- Amending native soil:
 - 10%-20% compost in blend, depending on intended use
- Manufactured topsoil:
 - 10%-50% compost in blend, depending on characteristics of other components and intended use



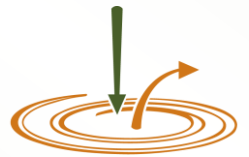
Typical Golf Course Usage

- Topdressing Mix:
 - ¼ to ½ inch very fine compost applied to greens and fairways
- Construction Mix:
 - 10%-30% compost in blend, depending on specifications



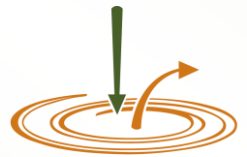
Environmental Markets

- Erosion control
- Storm water filtration
- Bioremediation
- Surface mine reclamation
- Wetland construction & restoration



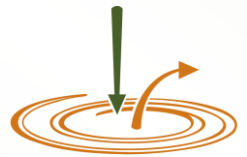
Compost Application Rates for Agriculture

Compost Required per Acre				
To provide:	1/2 inch	1 inch	2 inches	4 inches
Apply:	67 cy/acre	134 cy/acre	268 cy/acre	536 cy/acre



Major Steps to Developing Compost Markets

- Identify and characterize markets in your area
- Evaluate your compost quality and composting operation
- Seek compost distribution and marketing options
- Prepare a marketing plan
- Implement a marketing program



Florida Fertilizer Requirements

DACS - DEP

- Chapter 576 FS and Chapter 5E-1 FAC:
 - Commercial fertilizer is subject to a \$1 per ton fee plus 50¢ per ton for products containing nitrogen or phosphorus
 - Potentially applicable to all compost based on how the law is written
- If applied to compost this would cause a significant financial burden
- DEP, at the request of biosolids compost producers, amended language in Chapter 62-640 to allow USCC STA certification as an alternative to fertilizer registration.
 - Fertilizer registration is still required for material distributed in the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River Watersheds
 - Does not exempt the biosolids composts from any requirements of the DACS, including any fertilizer licensing requirements

