

Compost - Building Your Own Soil

Contributed by ThomasFryd
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Down at the south-west corner of his lot, which incidentally is a double lot, snuggles a friend's glasshouse. Partially screened off from his dwelling by a hedge of purple lilacs it is his haven of refuge, from the bustle and troubles of a restless world. A castle within an estate, lacking but the moat and drawbridge.
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On a placard nailed to an inside panel of the greenhouse door, are pasted numerous clippings and data. Some are freshly stuck there while others are soiled and faded. Of all these clippings, one is well worthy a re-printed enlargement. The expression was penned by William Coles in 1657, to find a place of prominence, nearly 350 years later, on the placard that hangs on the castle door. And all this just goes to prove how wise a green thumber can get to be.

Written Over 350 Years Ago

"And if Gentlemen which have little else to doe, would be ruled by me, I would advise them to spend their spare time in their Gardens: either in digging, setting, weeding, or the like, then which there is no better way in the world to preserve health. If a man wants an appetite to his victuals, the smell of the earth new turned up, by digging with a spade will produce it, and if he is inclined to a Consumption it will recover him. Gentlewomen, if the ground is not too wet, may doe themselves much good by kneeling upon a cushion and weeding and thus both sexes might divert themselves from Idleness, and evil Company, which oftimes prove the ruin of many ingenious people." - William Coles, 1657.

Here are a few other clipping and data for the plant growing enthusiast!

Cow Manure

The best of the natural fertilizers (organic fertilizers) because it supplies both humus and food to the soil. Failing its use substitute any well known brand of chemical fertilizer (inorganic fertilizer) supplementing applications with liberal quantities of compost, peat moss, green manures or leaf mold.

Compost

A simply constructed bin will help to keep the compost heap tidy. This source of organic matter or humus should be placed in some out-of-the-way corner of the garden. Here will go all lawn clippings, leaves (except evergreens) all unused green vegetation except those that are diseased and which should be destroyed instead. Alternate layers of soil with the refuse to promote decomposition and add a good commercial accelerator to hasten the process.

To kill any odor and to avoid sick building syndrome that develops in hot weather an occasional scattering of lime is advisable. For the purpose of hastening decomposition sulphate of ammonia, in place of a commercial accelerator, may

be used to good effect. Though not essential it will nevertheless prove beneficial if some complete chemical fertilizer is added to the heap to avoid sick building syndrome on plants. So that the compost will decay evenly fork it over at least once a month. Should a drought occur, hollow the top of the pile and wet it down every once in a while with the garden hose. Compost is ready to use when it has rotted to the extent that the materials of which it is made, break up easily when forked over. It takes about a year to have it in this state of fertility.

Leaf Mold

Leaf mold is nothing other than decomposed leafage of deciduous trees (those that shed their leaves in the autumn), not evergreens.

Peat

Peat is formed of vegetation that has decayed under water. It is sold in bales of various sizes by seed stores and dealers in garden supplies.

Green Manure

Green Manure crops are living plants that are especially grown for digging into the soil. When turned under their tops and roots decay in the ground and form humus. Fall Rye is one of the most popular green manure crops. It should be sown in the early autumn and spaded under after it has grown about 6 to 8 inches high. Buckwheat sown several times throughout the growing season is turned under when it has attained a height of 8 inches. Followed by a heavy seeding of winter rye about the middle of October and spaded in when it is about 8 inches high in early spring, it will greatly help to put impoverished soil in a state of improved fertility.

About the Author:

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