Quality of growing media matters

PRODUCT SHEET

COMPOST

Compost is a nutrient-rich organic material created through the natural decomposition of plant-based residual streams. The composting process produces a material that is used as a renewable substrate raw material or soil improver.

What is compost?

Compost is a product resulting from the decomposition of plant remains. The activity of microorganisms drives this decomposition process. Compost consists of organic material in various fractions (e.g., humus or twigs) and a small proportion of mineral components (e.g., sand or clay). At composting facilities, the decomposition through the composting process is carried out in a controlled manner. Different organic materials (including grass, pruning waste and leaves) are carefully dosed and incorporated into the process. The composter regularly turns the material, ensuring optimal aeration, oxygen levels, moisture and temperature. Composting is a biological method of eliminating pathogens from materials.

Origin

At composting facilities, various organic residual streams, including green waste from public, private and professional sources, are collected and processed into compost.

Properties

The quality of compost depends heavily on the materials used during the composting process.

Chemical

Nutrient level	moderate
Unwanted salts	moderate-high
pH-H_2O	5.0-9.0
pH-buffering capacity	moderate-very high
Nitrogen immobilization	low-moderate
Pesticide residues	common

Physical

Air content (%-v)	5-15
Water uptake characteristic (WOK)	moderate
Water retention capacity	low-moderate
Stability	moderate-fair

Biological

Susceptibility to saprotrophic fungi	moderate
Human pathogens	moderate

Purpose of use

Renewable raw material, enhances the efficacy of organic fertilizers in organic substrates.

Application

Compost is a raw material used in growing media up to a certain percentage or as a soil improver in garden soils or public green spaces.

Distinctive RHP quality

RHP-certified compost is broadly applicable due to its low salt content. For compost with the RHP quality mark, not all types of green waste are permitted. Agricultural and horticultural waste streams are excluded due to the fact that these bring a higher risk of plant diseases.

Furthermore, strict requirements are imposed on the composting process for the RHP quality mark to ensure proper sanitation.This will ensure that any pathogens present in the green waste are eliminated to a maximum.

In RHP-certified growing media, only a certain dosage of compost is allowed. Compost can contain higher concentrations of certain nutrients, which can affect the culture when applied in a substrate. The dosage is determined through plant response tests and chemical composition analysis. For professional growing media with the RHP Horticulture quality mark, the maximum compost content is 30 percent. Certified companies classify the high-quality compost based on its nutrient levels and inform their customers in writing about this.

To assess the product's safety for plants, humans and animals, RHP carries out a risk assessment. The characteristics of the composting facility must not affect the purity and quality of the product. Specific process requirements at the site have to ensure that:

- ✔ the compost is not contaminated by viable weed seeds (zero tolerance).
- ✔ the compost is not mixed with other products through machinery such as tires, loaders or other transport equipment.
- ✔ the compost is not contaminated or mixed from surrounding areas.
- ✔ the compost is not polluted due to an un clean storage location.
- ✔ the compost is not contaminated or mixed from/by the floor or surrounding materials.

Compost with the RHP quality mark must also comply with the legal regulations applicable in the country concerned.

No rights can be derived from the information in this publication.
December 2024, RHP ©