

International Compost Awareness Week

International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the compost industry. It is celebrated nationwide and in other countries each year during the first full week of May. Started in Canada in 1995, ICAW has continued to grow as more people, businesses, municipalities, schools and organizations are recognizing the importance of composting and the long-term benefits from organics recycling. The goal of the program is to raise the awareness of the public regarding the benefits of using compost to improve or maintain high quality soil, to grow healthy plants, reduce the use of fertilizer and pesticides, improve water quality and protect the environment. The program includes a poster contest, programs at schools and activities and events promoted through governments, public municipalities and local businesses nationwide. Each year a theme is chosen. The theme for ICAW 2019 is **Cool the Climate - Compost!** The dates for 2019 are May 5 – 11. ICAW is a program run by the Composting Council Research & Education Foundation, <https://www.compostfoundation.org/ICAW/ICAW-Home>.

The Basic Goals of Compost Awareness Week

To increase the diversion of organics from the main waste stream through increasing awareness of and participation in organics diversion initiatives (centralized composting, curbside, home composting, community composting) and; to increase awareness of, and advocate the proper use of, 'soil-improving composts'.



The Benefits of Composting & Compost Use

Composting and compost use have numerous benefits in addition to reducing the amount of waste destined for landfills.

- **Reduces Waste**
- **Improves Soil**
 - Creates a rich nutrient-filled material, humus
 - Increases the nutrient content in soils
 - Helps soils retain moisture
 - Reduces or eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers
 - Suppresses plant diseases and pests
 - Promotes higher yields of agricultural crops
 - Helps regenerate poor soils
 - Has the ability to clean up (remediate) contaminated soil
- **Reduces Stormwater Runoff & Soil Erosion**
- **Protects the Climate**
 - Cuts Landfill Methane Emissions
 - Stores carbon
 - Improves soil's ability to store carbon
 - Substitutes for energy-intensive fertilizers, pesticides, and fungicides
 - Improves plant growth, and thus carbon sequestration
 - Reduces energy use for irrigation
- **Creates Jobs & Supports Local Economies**
 - Composting can be small-scale and local
 - Jobs are local
 - Composting linked to urban farm production
 - Composting can diversify farm products and increase farm income
 - Compost products tend to be used locally
 - Use of compost products sustains additional businesses and green jobs

