



INTERNATIONAL
COMPOST
ALLIANCE

HEALTHY SOILS • HEALTHY PLANET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Compost! Feed the Soil that Feeds Us

International Compost Alliance Launches Global Call to Action for Compost Awareness Week 2026

The International Compost Alliance (ICA) is launching a global call to action for **International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) 2026**, urging governments, industry, educators and households to recognize and prioritize compost as a strategic resource for soil health, food production and climate resilience.

Running **May 3–9**, this year's theme is "**Compost! Feed the Soil that Feeds Us**," which highlights compost's role in returning valuable organic matter and essential nutrients to soils and, in turn, people, strengthening the natural systems that underpin food production.

The campaign comes at a time of growing pressure on agricultural and land management systems, including rising concern over the cost and availability of mineral fertilizers. Against that backdrop, the ICA said compost should be viewed as more than a valuable waste diversion solution, but, as an increasingly fundamental source of nutrients and carbon for soils.

"Compost is often discussed in terms of diverting waste, but a more important value is in what it gives back," said Susan Antler, Executive Director, Compost Council of Canada, speaking on behalf of the **International Compost Alliance**. "It contains valuable nutrients, supports soil biology, improves soil structure and water retention and helps reduce reliance on the increasingly volatile economics of external inputs such as mineral fertilizers."

As input costs rise and supply chains remain vulnerable to geopolitical and economic disruption, compost is drawing greater attention as a practical and local tool to help build soil fertility, nutrient resilience and long-term productivity.

“Compost is not a complete replacement for all fertilizer needs in every system, but it is a proven part of the natural solution to feed our soils,” said Susan Antler. “It helps return nutrients already present in our food and yard waste back to the land, where they can be used productively rather than lost forever in landfills or incineration.”

ICA members say that message is central to this year’s celebration: at its core, composting is about recovering value from organic materials and putting it back to work in soils, landscapes and food systems.

Compost’s contribution extends well beyond nutrient supply. By improving soil structure, moisture retention and biological activity, compost can help soils perform better under pressure from drought, erosion, land degradation and other climate-related stresses.

Across multiple countries, ICA members and partners will mark the week with public education campaigns, workshops, school engagement, compost facility tours and community events, all aimed at increasing understanding of compost’s environmental, agricultural and economic benefits.

The ICA also encourages policymakers, local authorities, farmers, businesses, educators and the public to use the week to expand composting programs, increase compost use and strengthen recognition of organics recycling as part of a more circular and secure future.

International Compost Awareness Week 2026 runs from May 3 to May 9. Further information is available at <https://www.compost.org/compost-week.html>.

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Key facts:

Globally more than 85 million tonnes of biowaste are recycled every year, with composting naturally recycling over 1 million tonnes of plant macronutrients.

Compost’s nutrient replacement value refers to how much of the nutrients it contains, primarily nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), can substitute for synthetic fertilizers in supporting plant growth. The exact value depends on the feedstock (food scraps, garden clippings, etc.), composting process, maturity, and moisture content. Compost’s value is further punctuated with an array of micronutrients and organic matter.

Typically 1 tonne of fresh weight compost can supply:

Nutrient	Typical range	Availability in first growing season
Nitrogen (N)	7.5-11kg/t	0.5 - 5%
Phosphate (P ₂ O ₅)	3-4 kg/t	50%
Potash (K ₂ O)	5 - 8 kg/t	80%
Magnesium (MgO)	3 - 4 kg/t	
Sulphur (SO ₃)	2- 4 kg/t	

Organic matter is a vital component of fertile soils. Compost is a valuable source of stable organic matter that can form part of a long-term strategy to maintain and enhance soil quality, and thereby help to maintain soils in good agricultural and environmental condition.

- Compost alone may not fully meet short-term N needs in high-demand crops, but it can significantly reduce fertilizer inputs.
- Phosphorus and potassium in compost are particularly valuable, especially in times of high fertilizer costs or supply disruptions.
- Long-term benefits include improved soil structure, water retention, and microbial activity, which enhance overall nutrient efficiency.

Not only does compost support healthy, productive soils, it also works hard for the climate, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents a year through storing carbon in soil and offsetting fertilizer use (an equivalent to driving an average gas-powered car for 36 billion kilometres (23 billion miles); almost 95 thousand times the distance between the earth and the moon!¹

¹ Source : Dr Jane Gilbert, Carbon Clarity.

Events:

- **6th May – Compost Council of Canada webinar** to celebrate ICAW 2026- “Let’s Go to the Ex! Canadian National Exhibition’s Waste Management Program in Action” at 13:00 Eastern Time. Register here: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_KehYlggnRg61GgycHzqvbw
- **5th May – ECN webinar** to celebrate ICAW 2026 and to dive deeper into how compost from abundant biowaste strengthens soil health and farm sustainability at 14:00 CET. Join here: <https://europeancompostnetwork.my.webex.com/europeancompostnetwork.my-en/j.php?MTID=m31d7ae4332504db07e23da9ff2641639>
- **5th May – ICAW webinar: Landfills, food waste and community impact** at 14:00 EDT. Details here: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/icaw-webinar-landfills-food-waste-and-community-impact>
- **7th May – Spring into backyard composting webinar** at 14:00 pacific time. Details here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/EE20OvsoTielgMDpma2xog#/registration>



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FEED THE SOIL THAT FEEDS US

Recycling organics is a simple act of love for our Earth and one another.

Choosing to recycle organics instead of throwing them in the garbage means less greenhouse gas going into the atmosphere. And using compost returns Life to our soils. Living, healthy soils then do their part: providing nutrient-dense food, stronger ecosystems and a more resilient future for all.

The Three Sisters – corn, beans and squash – are a foundational, symbiotic agricultural system of many First Nations communities. When planted together, not only do their harvests provide a complete, nutritious diet but they are symbolic of how our own actions, choices and community are part of a larger, stronger whole. Each plant supports and depends on the others: corn offers a strong stalk for beans to climb, beans return nitrogen to the soil, giving a helping hand to other plants, and squash spreads out to cover the soil, helping hold moisture and protect the soil's living ecosystem.

It's all about the Circle of Life.

For the sustainability and health of our communities, today and for generations to come.

And it can all start with one simple act ...

COMPOST!



NOURRISONS LE SOL QUI NOUS NOURRIT

Recycler les résidus organiques est un simple geste d'amour pour notre Terre et pour nous tous.

Choisir de recycler les résidus organiques plutôt que de les jeter à la poubelle, c'est réduire les émissions de gaz à effet de serre dans l'atmosphère. Et utiliser du compost, c'est redonner vie à nos sols.

Des sols vivants et sains jouent alors leur rôle : ils fournissent des aliments riches en nutriments, des écosystèmes plus solides et un avenir plus résilient pour tous.

Les « Trois Sœurs » – le maïs, les haricots et les courges – constituent un système agricole symbiotique fondamental pour de nombreuses communautés des Premières Nations. Lorsqu'elles sont plantées ensemble, non seulement leurs récoltes fournissent une alimentation complète et nutritive, mais elles symbolisent également la manière dont nos propres actions, nos choix et notre communauté s'inscrivent dans un tout plus vaste et plus fort. Chaque plante soutient les autres et dépend d'elles : le maïs offre une tige solide sur laquelle les haricots peuvent grimper, les haricots restituent de l'azote au sol, aidant ainsi les autres plantes, et la courge s'étale pour recouvrir le sol, contribuant à retenir l'humidité et à protéger l'écosystème vivant du sol.

Tout repose sur le cycle de la vie.

Pour la durabilité et la santé de nos communautés, aujourd'hui et pour les générations à venir.

Et cela commence avec chacun d'entre nous ...

COMPOST!



-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

The International Compost Alliance is a global network of compost organizations working to advance compost production, use and awareness worldwide. Through collaboration, education and advocacy, ICA promotes composting as a practical solution for healthier soils, resource recovery and environmental sustainability. Members include:

[The Australian Organics Recycling Association \(AORA\);](#)

[Compost Council of Canada \(CCC\);](#)

[European Compost Network \(ECN\);](#)

[International Solid Waste Association \(ISWA\);](#)

[Italian Composting and Biogas Association \(CIC\);](#)

[CRÉ - Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Association of Ireland;](#)

[The Organics Recycling Association of South Africa \(ORASA\);](#)

[WasteMINZ \(Waste Management Institute of New Zealand\);](#)

[The Renewable Energy Association \(REA\);](#)

[The United States Composting Council \(USCC\);](#) and

[The Compost Research & Education Foundation \(CREF\)](#)