

2023

International Compost Awareness Week TOOLKIT



May 7 to May 13, 2023



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ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COMPOST AWARENESS WEEK

For 2023, International Compost Awareness Week is celebrated from May 7 to May 13. This year's theme is "For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food...COMPOST!" The event first started in Canada in 1995 and is now being observed in countries around the world.

This annual celebration helps showcase the importance of recycling organics and returning organic matter to our soils, as Nature has always intended.

“A focused attention on organics recycling and compost use can effectively deliver a myriad of benefits. To-date, Canada has achieved approximately one-third of this annual potential,” said Susan Antler, executive director, The Compost Council of Canada. “The carbon sequestration alone, of what we have accomplished so far, is offsetting the greenhouse gas impact of about one billion kilometres of gas-powered car driving annually.”

“It is important to note that this is mostly voluntary work by citizens, done through municipal and private sector organics recycling initiatives,” says Antler. “By participating in compost programs, and by using compost to store carbon in gardens, lawns and on agricultural soil, we are helping to put the brakes on climate change.”

Added to this are the proven improvements compost makes to our soil’s health, structure and vitality. This healthier soil delivers excellent water conservation and quality enhancements, improved food security and more nutrient-dense food.

"It's a pretty amazing package of natural and economic benefits there for the taking year-upon-year," added Larry Conrad, National Chair of The Compost Council of Canada.

"It's time that every business and community come to terms with the fact that organic residuals are not waste but a vital resource. They need to be recycled. It's time for more to be done, sooner and faster, to allow compost to deliver its full potential."

C H A P T E R

02



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FACTS ABOUT COMPOST

- The use of landfill space and incineration can be reduced by at least one-third when organics are recycled. Focused attention on recycling organic residuals is key to achieving high-waste diversion rates.
- Methane, a potent greenhouse gas with 86 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, can be significantly reduced through the elimination of organics being landfilled.
- Soil health and productivity is dependent on organic matter – the essence of compost -- to provide the sustenance for the biological diversity in the soil. Plants depend on this soil life to convert materials into plant-available nutrients and to keep the soil well-aerated.

Additional benefits include:

- The reduced need for pesticide usage to ward off soil-borne and other plant diseases.
- Compost helps to fight climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Compost's return to the soil also serves as a "carbon bank," helping to store carbon, thereby removing it from the atmosphere.
- Compost is a huge benefit for both water conservation and quality.
- When used in water quality projects, compost binds pollutants to the organic material and prevents them from entering our lakes, wetlands, streams and rivers. Soil erosion is mitigated, and water-holding capacity improved, through compost's enhancement of soil structure, binding soil particles together. Reports have shown that for every 1% of organic matter content, the soil can hold around 20,000 gallons of plant-available water.
- Using one 25L Bag of Compost added to soil offsets the greenhouse gas emissions of 30 kilometres of gas-powered car driving
- PLUS it helps soils grow more nutrient-dense crops

C H A P T E R

03



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ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Encourage your local municipal council to sign a proclamation to declare May 7 - 13 as International Compost Awareness Week
- Display compost artwork (like our poster!) and outreach materials in your office lobby
- Begin your own or join a social media campaign (see Chapter 4).
- Highlight International Compost Awareness Week in a newsletter, blog, or magazine

- Host a compost sale day at your school, office, local park, or community centre
- Cultivate learning about compost and growing healthy food by starting your own veggie garden. (Get your free guide at <https://www.growarow.org/gardening-guide>)
- Host a screening of "How our soil influences our brain health" - a 45 minute presentation by Dr. Bonnie Kaplan, Professor Emerita of the University of Calgary and co-author of THE BETTER BRAIN: <https://youtu.be/rIEqMO4L30k>
- Download and share our free Backyard Compost Guide: https://www.compost.org/backyard_compost
- Read and share our report, "Recruiting Soil to Tackle Climate Change: A Roadmap for Canada": <http://www.compost.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Recruiting-Soil-to-Tackle-Climate-Change.pdf>

C H A P T E R

04



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SOCIAL MEDIA

Use **#SaveSoil** and **#icaw2023** for all social media posts regarding 2023 International Compost Awareness Week events, activities, and resources! Mention **@CompostCanada** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn for a chance to get your post shared on our pages!

Post ideas you can use or adapt

It's International Compost Awareness Week!
#DYK that adding one 25L Bag of compost to soil offsets the greenhouse gas emissions of 30 km of gas-powered car driving. Say thanks by adding some to your garden and educating others about the importance of compost!
#savesoil #icaw2023 #compostweek

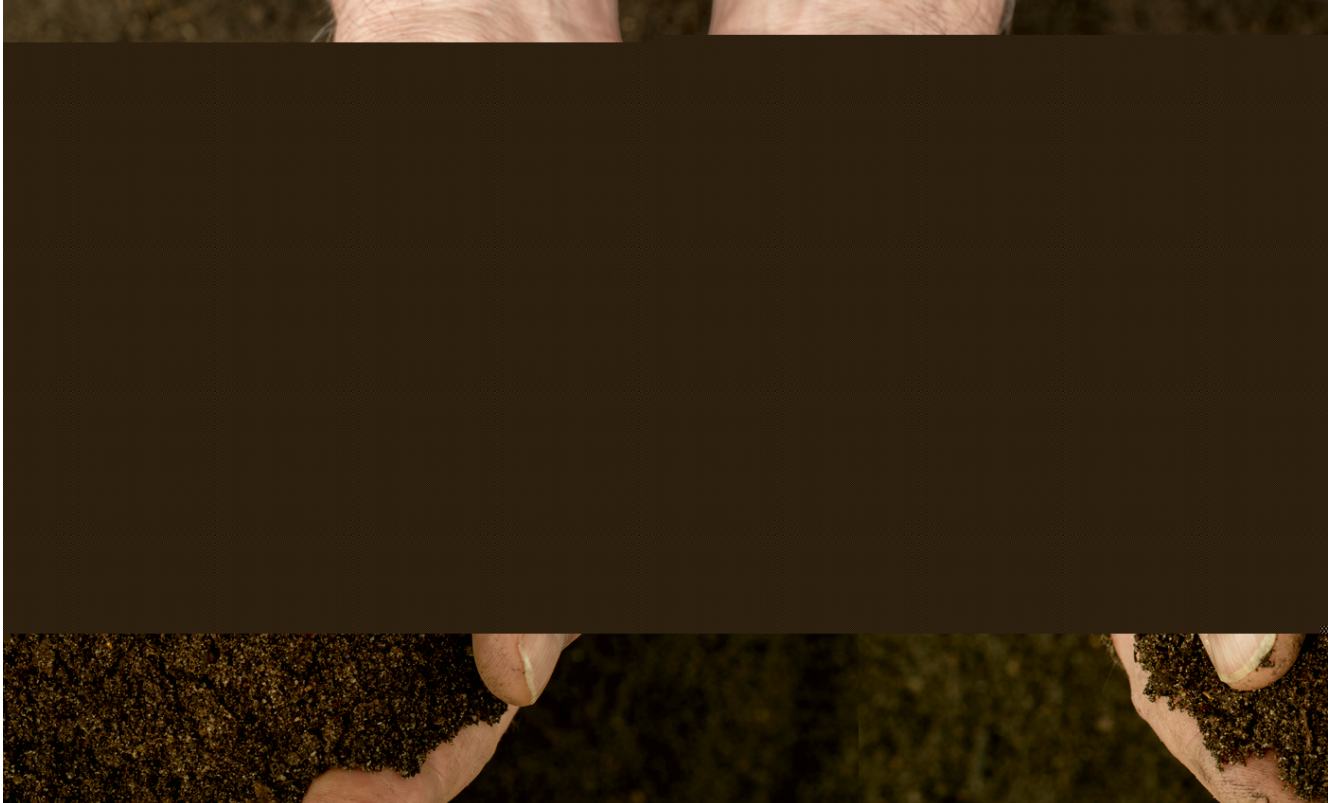
Composting is a powerful way we can reduce waste and help the environment. Keeping organic waste out of landfills reduces the production of methane – a greenhouse gas that's over 80 times as potent as carbon dioxide.
#savesoil #icaw2023 #compostweek

Vegetable and fruit peelings, lawn and garden trimmings, manures, wood, and soiled paper are all examples of raw materials that can be composted. Compost does a great job of feeding the soil and keeping your lawn and garden alive and healthy. #savesoil #icaw2023 #compostweek



C H A P T E R

05



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GRAPHICS AND PHOTOS

Click here to download the official International Compost Awareness Week Logo and share it with your friends and colleagues!



Pair your own compost images with the suggested social media posts in Chapter 4 of the toolkit.

You can also visit our website at:

<http://www.compost.org/compost-week-resources> to find our official ICAW social media images. Please feel free to download and share these.



For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food ...



It all starts with you !

Your thoughtful act of recycling organics does so much. Recycling organics means less greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. And using compost feeds the soil. Our soils then return this kindness with healthier food, cleaner water, richer biodiversity and a calmer climate.

Thank you for doing your best.

COMPOST !



Special recognition to the inspiring Soil Health advocacy work of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

C H A P T E R

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit our website at www.compost.org for lots of resources related to organics recycling - information you can use not just during Compost Week, but throughout the year.