

## Compost

Compost is derived from recycled organic materials processed by natural organisms. It offers multiple soil benefits by nourishing plants, improving soil structure, and retaining crucial nutrients.

Composting helps lower the amount of food waste that goes to landfills, and it creates a natural, budget-friendly resource for gardens, promoting healthier soil and conserving water.

### How can I get compost?

Here are two ways to get compost on Norfolk Island:

- You can start composting your organic waste.
  - You can use this step by step guide on how to compost effectively to start ([How to compost effectively: step-by-step guide | Department of Environment and Science, Queensland \(des.qld.gov.au\)](#)).
- You can purchase compost from NIRC.
  - Go to Customer Care and pay for the desired amount of compost, as per Council's scheduled Fees and Charges ([Fees and Charges – Norfolk Island Regional Council \(nirc.gov.au\)](#))
  - Arrange pickup at the Waste Management Centre - contact Section Leader, Waste Management - 53280)

### Using compost safely

Compost can be a source of microbial, chemical and physical contamination given its nature. NIRC uses an established composting process (in-vessel composting), as well as yearly testing to ensure that the compost available to the community is safe. Even with this monitoring and controls in place, growers should handle compost safely to avoid contamination.

### General hygiene rules when handling compost

- Keep cuts covered
- Wash hands with soap and running water after handling compost, before eating or drinking, after removing your gloves
- Avoid touching your face when handling compost
- Wear gloves

### Other measures to manage exposure

- To reduce exposure to dust
  - wet potting mix and compost before handling, during use and when cleaning up to keep it moist
  - open bags of potting mix carefully and direct the opening away from the face
  - handle potting mix and compost in a well-ventilated area
  - when emptying bags of potting mix and applying compost, avoid shaking the bag and keep the product close to the ground
  - avoid using water under high pressure on potting mix and compost
  - wear a properly fitted particulate respirator (e.g. disposable half-face respirator with a P1 or P2 filter) when handling potting mix and compost and turning over compost heaps
- Store bagged potting mix in a cool, dry place and out of direct sunlight
- Wash work clothes regularly