



San Pasqual Valley Soils' Guidelines for Using Our Manure-based Valley's Best Compost®

Craig Kolodge Ph.D. (aka Dr. K)

March 8, 2021



Animal-based manures have been widely used for thousands of years as the primary source to fertilize cultivated crops for both human and animal consumption. Cow manure is especially valued as an ideal source for providing naturally derived plant nutrients. It is also used for regenerating soils following harvest and prior to planting the next crop.

San Pasqual Valley Soils Valley's Best Compost® is unique among all area composts for being the only OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) listed product available for use in certified organic operations under the USDA National Organic Program. We produce this dairy manure-based compost locally and make it available in bags and bulk. This product is used widely by professional organic vegetable growers, landscape contractors and turf managers in San Diego County. It is also popular with home gardeners that want to increase the nutrient and biological activity of their soils with a mature manure. This product is safe to use without fear of unwanted bacterial contaminants or unpleasant odors.

Thermophilic produced manure compost can add billions of beneficial bacteria to the soil while removing the risk of pathogen exposure to those using it. This process makes Valley's Best an exceptional soil amendment and value with few equals. It is a source of bio-available organic Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium that is slowly released for optimal plant root absorption. Valley's Best will also increase the water holding capacity, physical structure and microbial health of the soil.



So where and how should one best use this valuable resource?

Below are a few well documented uses for Valley's Best Compost® to assure growing success:

Turf Establishment & Top-dressing:

Nothing compares to cow manure compost for delivering dramatic results than when it is used to establish new turf and rejuvenate or maintain established turfgrass. It accomplishes this by enhancing soil water holding capacity, microbial health and the soil and turf nutritional profile. Click on the link below to see a time-lapsed video showing the impressive results of a top-dress application of manure-based compost (approximately ¼" - ½" depth) to a California lawn after only seven days.

[Organic Composted Manure on Lawn - Amazing Results! Time Lapse video by Kelsey Gallegos](#)

Local landscape contractors also report excellent outcomes when blending two parts of Valley's Best Compost® with three parts of Planter's Blend Compost (our landscape trimmings compost) and incorporating it to a 3" depth prior to laying sod or seeding new turfgrass. Landscapers have commented that this application continues to feed the developing turfgrass for months with excellent root and turfgrass establishment.

Vegetable and Flower Garden Beds:

Apply 1-2" of Valley's Best Compost® to the soil surface of a cultivated bed and incorporate to a 6" depth. Because there is a wide variety of plant species and their response to soil salt levels is variable, it is advisable to water the compost treated beds thoroughly two to three times over a 1-2 week period (at a minimum) prior to planting. This allows the soil to mellow and the compost to further cure and stabilize within the new soil environment. This practice will minimize any damage to salt sensitive plants and their root system.

Trees, Shrubs and Vines:

Apply Valley's Best as a surface application at a minimum depth of ½" within the dripline around the base of new and established plants. Follow with a mulch application and water thoroughly. Repeat annually as a maintenance practice.

The above are examples of how to apply and optimize using manure-based compost soil amendments like Valley's Best. You may also consider adding a supplemental source of nitrogen fertilizer for plants that require higher levels of this nutrient for optimal growth. For example, corn has a higher requirement for nitrogen than a crop like lettuce. As you develop more experience and feedback from using Valley's Best Compost® for your unique growing conditions and plant varieties, you will learn what levels and cultural practices provide the best results.

Happy Gardening!