



# STA Certified™ COMPOST

Clarity. Consistency. Confidence.



**US** Composting  
Council®





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Council®

# Established 1990

**The US Composting Council is a trade and professional association advancing compost manufacturing, compost utilization, and organics recycling to benefit our members, society, and the environment.**



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## Our Mission

The US Composting Council advances compost manufacturing, compost utilization, and organics recycling to benefit our members, society, and the environment.

## Our Vision

We believe compost manufacturing and compost utilization are central to creating healthy soils, clean air and water, a stable climate, and a **regenerative** society.

## Diversity

The USCC is committed to growing diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) within the organization and throughout the compost industry by institutionalizing DEIA in our operations and initiatives.

# ***Today we're made up of***

- **Over 950 members**
- **15 Committees**
- **15 State Chapters**
- **Annual Conference with over 1,600 attendees**

# Areas of Engagement

## Membership

- Communication: Member Toolkits, White Papers
- State Chapters
- Corporate Leadership Council and Target Organics

## Advocacy

- National Outreach and Lobbying
- State Policy & Permitting Support
- Partnering with Organizations

## Market Development

- STA Program
- Marketing STA Certified Compost®
- Working with various Compost Markets

## Professional Development

- Annual Conference Program
- Compost University & Webinars
- Professional Certification
  - Certified Compost Professional (CCP™)
  - Certified Compost Operations Manager (CCOM™)



# What is STA?



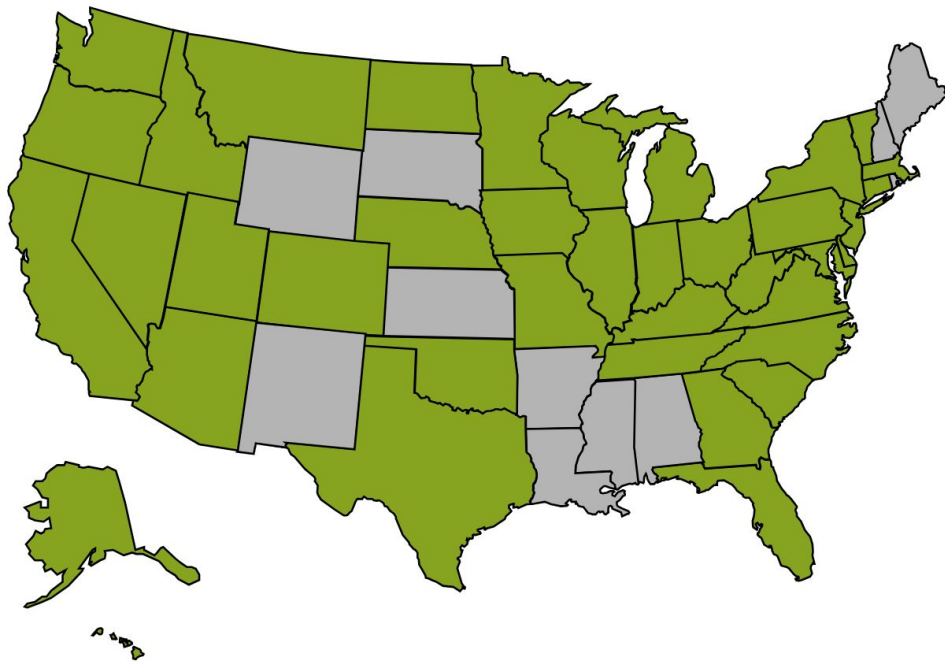
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**Celebrating** 25 years!

**STA Certified™ Compost**

# STA stands for...

# Seal of Testing Assurance



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## STA Certified™ Compost

# Seal of Testing Assurance

*The Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) Program, administered by the US Composting Council, certifies **compost products that meet specific sampling, testing, and standards outlined in the TMECC guidelines.** The program complements—but does not replace—other regulations, which remain the responsibility of the producer.*

Packing

Compost Parameters

Analysis Reporting

Permitting

Regulatory Limits

Sampling

Labeling

Testing Proficiency

Test Methods

Test Frequency

Shipping

Feedstock Disclosure





### CLARITY

Similar to a nutrition label, the STA Program's Compost Technical Data Sheet (CTDS) **includes test results, a list of ingredients, and recommended directions for use.**

### CONSISTENCY

The STA Program provides checks and balances within the STA Lab and Participant network to **ensure proficiency and consistency with testing procedures and compliance**, providing apples-to-apples comparisons of compost properties.

### CONFIDENCE

Similar to trusting a vehicle history report when purchasing a vehicle, the STA's CTDS report provides consumers with **confidence and knowledge of what is in the compost and how it was produced.**

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## WHY STA CERTIFIED COMPOST?

*Quality is in the eye of the consumer:* Compost use and selection decisions consider many factors, and therefore are not one-size-fits-all.

The Seal of Testing Assurance (STA) Program helps the end compost user make the best decision for their specific application.



# STA Program Rules

- **Must be in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations and permitting**
- **Must manufacture a compost product as defined in the rules and AAPFCO definition**
- **Must test compost at an STA Certified Lab**
- **Fill out a Chain of Custody lab sample submittal**
- **Submit samples based on frequency of testing**
- **Disclose feedstock composition**
- **Provide instructions for use**
- **Pass EPA heavy metals and pathogens limits**
- **Sign on the annual STA Agreement, submit a renewal application**



# Why are composters required to use specific laboratories for testing?

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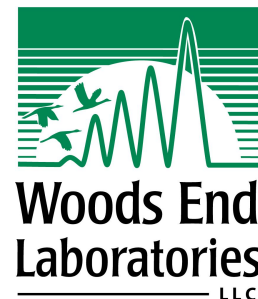


# STA Certified Labs

- Enrolled in our Compost Analysis Proficiency (CAP) Program
- Labs are required to follow methods from the Test Methods for the Examination of Composting & Compost (TMECC) Lab Manual
- STA Certified Labs are sent samples three times per year and their analysis is compared against each other
- Labs must score within the confidence limit (CL) for each parameter

## *The compost manufacturer must:*

- Fill out the Chain of Custody for each sample
- Test at a frequency determined by their wet tonnage
  - 1 - 6,200 tons = 1 sample per 3 months
  - 6,201 - 17,500 tons = 1 sample per 2 months
  - 17,501 tons and above = 1 sample per 1 month



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# Consumer Use Guidelines



\*Required to meet specific agronomic ranges



## Consumer Compost Use Program - Tree & Shrub Class Establishment & Maintenance

### Description

The US Composting Council has developed the Consumer Compost Use Program to provide the consumer with an easy to use guide for compost application in the home garden and landscape. Use of this product meets the acceptable parameter range for home tree and shrub establishment. Look for the Consumer Compost Use Program icons for other applications of compost use. For more information please go to [www.compostingcouncil.org](http://www.compostingcouncil.org)

**Soil Analysis:** A soil analysis should be completed by a reputable laboratory to determine any nutritional requirements, pH, and organic matter adjustments that may be necessary. Once these are determined, the soil can be appropriately amended to a range suitable for the particular plants being established. A list of state agricultural cooperative extension labs can be found at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html>

### Compost Parameters for Tree & Shrub Use

Parameter	Unit	Range		Notes
		Preferred	Acceptable	
Stability	mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C per g OM per day	<2	<4	The lower the number, the more completely composted the product.
Maturity	% seed emergence & vigor	90-100	80-100	The higher the percentage, the more versatile the product.
Moisture Content	% wet weight basis	40-50%	35-65%	Products with higher moisture contents may be used. They may simply be more difficult to apply.
Organic Content	Matter % dry weight basis	35-60%	25-65%	Creating a soil containing up to 5% - 10% organic matter is desirable in typical, well drained soils.
Particle Size	Screen size to pass through	3/8"	1/2"	Planting compost should be finely (3/8" - 1/2") screened, whereas coarsely screened compost (1"-2" max. size) should be used in mulching.
pH	pH units	6.0-7.5	5.5 - 8.5	Modify soil pH with lime, etc., if necessary, based on soil testing results.
Soluble Salts (Electrical Conductivity)	dS/m (mmhos/cm) dry weight basis	Maximum of 5	Maximum of 15	Keep in mind that most soluble salts are also plant nutrients. Compost containing a higher soluble salt content should be applied at lower application rates, and 'watered in' well.
Physical Contaminants*	% dry weight basis	<0.5%	<1%	Small stones may be deemed more acceptable than man-made inerts (e.g., plastic).

\*All federal and state standards related to biological and chemical contamination must also be met.

### Applications

**Establishment:** Excavate a planting hole slightly shallower and 2 to 3 times the width of the root ball or container. Set the root ball on firm soil so that the top of the root ball sits slightly higher than the final grade. Uniformly blend compost with the excavated soil at one (1) part by volume compost to 2-3 parts by volume soil. Compost with higher amounts of salts and nutrients should be used at lower rates (e.g. 1:3 or 1:4 parts compost to soil). Backfill and firm the soil blend around the root ball within the planting hole. Always water thoroughly after planting. *It should be noted that whenever possible, trees and shrubs should be planted in a mass planting bed, where multiple plants are established in a larger amended bed. This technique allows for greater planting success.*

Lower compost application rates should be used for salt sensitive crops (e.g., conifers), or where composts possessing higher salt and nutrient levels are used, while higher application rates may be used for plants that require greater amounts of fertility.

**Maintenance:** Apply a coarser compost mulch (1" - 2" screened) over the garden bed to conserve moisture, for weed suppression and/or for aesthetic purposes. **Note:** The nutrients contained in compost should be considered when applying fertilization. They will typically offset plant nutrient requirements, thereby potentially reducing fertilizer application rates. **Disclaimer:** The USCC makes no warranties regarding this product or its contents, quality, or suitability for any particular use. Please refer to the individual producer's product label for specific use instructions.

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# STA Database

side

ffr  
= 5  
=

73b3468893b70c54b3acd3106b3447f231e22fb3b5cdc9765  
1cf6a890435c92

Auto-logout if inactive 23:44

284 user(s) currently logged in:  
ffranciosi@compostingcouncil.org  
abird@silvercreekmaterials.com  
suzanne@laurelvalleysoils.com  
tdaniel

Logout

My Profile

Dashboard

+ Application

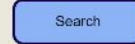
+ API

+ Settings



US Composting Council

## Welcome to the USCC Gateway



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Category	2024 – 2025 Cycle *
STA Participant Companies	220
STA Facilities	307
Total Number of STA Products	391
Derivative Products	44

# Current Program Initiatives

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**Involvement with the *American Society of  
Landscape Architects (ASLA)*  
and  
the *National Association of Landscape  
Professionals (NALP)***

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# ASLA

- Session highlighting Compost Use & STA Program, high interest, 200+ attendees
- Resource for Landscape Architects:
  - Compost & Soil Improvement: Tools for Climate Resilient Landscapes
- Joined 15 plus state ASLA chapters
- Involved with Climate Action Plan Committee



# NALP

- Represents one of the largest compost markets nationally
- Conversations with landscapers around compost application and increasing compost use
- Active with their sustainability initiatives and subcommittees





# Rebranded Consumer Use Guidelines

*formerly Compost Consumer Use Program*

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# Compost Consumer Use Program (CCUP) Revamp

## Now Consumer Use Guidelines

- Rebranded to Consumer Use Guidelines
- Updated parameters for each consumer use class
- Implemented CUG parameters in the Database
- Major redesign of logos



# Creation of Chain of Custody (COC) and Compost Technical Data Sheet (CTDS) in the Gateway

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# Chain of Custody & Compost Technical Data Sheet

- Participants will electronically generate COC and CTDS in the Gateway
- Testing data is stored in the Gateway and will cross-reference compost test results with specific parameters to determine pass or fail (creation of DOT CTDS)

**Simplifying compost  
selection and specification  
for end markets**

**Compost Technical Data Sheet**  
  
**California Department of Transportation**

**Contact Info**

Product	Test DOT Product
Company	Test DOT Company
Facility - Name	Test DOT Facility Name
Facility Telephone	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Facility Location	1053 E. Whitaker Mill Road, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604
Lab - Name	STA Certified Lab
Lab Location	STA Certified Lab Address
Date/Time Sample Mailed	2024-12-31 09:34:17 (America/Los_Angeles)
Date/Time Sample Received	2024-12-31 09:36:08 (America/Los_Angeles)

Customer, in order to guarantee that you are using the same product represented in this technical data sheet, check to make sure the product and manufacturer match this CTDS on the delivery ticket and invoice for your project. [Click here to view the Product on the current list of STA Certified Compost Participants.](#)

**DOT Test Parameters**

Compost Parameters	Reported as	Test Results		TMECC Method	PASS/FAIL
		Wet Weight	Dry Weight		
Moisture Content	%	1.08	N/A	03.09-A	• FINE (PASS) • MEDIUM (PASS) • COARSE (PASS)
Organic Matter Content	%	0.00	1.08	05.07-A	• FINE (PASS) • MEDIUM (PASS) • COARSE (PASS)
pH	pH Units	1.08		04.11-A	• FINE (PASS) • MEDIUM (PASS) • COARSE (PASS)
Soluble Salts (decreased conductivity EC <sub>2</sub> )	dS/m (mmhos/cm)	1.08		04.10-A	• FINE (PASS) • MEDIUM (PASS) • COARSE (PASS)
Particle Size - 2" (50.8 mm)	% passing	N/A	1.08	02.02-B	• MEDIUM (FAIL) • COARSE (FAIL)
Particle Size - 1" (25.4 mm)	% passing	N/A	1.08	02.02-B	• FINE (FAIL)
Particle Size - 3/8" (9.5 mm)	% passing	N/A	1.08	02.02-B	• FINE (FAIL) • MEDIUM (FAIL) • COARSE (PASS)
<b>Stability Indicator (respirometry)</b>					
CO <sub>2</sub> Evolution	mg CO <sub>2</sub> -C/g OM/day	N/A	1.08	05.08-B	• FINE (PASS) • MEDIUM (PASS) • COARSE (PASS)
<b>Maturity Indicator (bioassay)</b>					



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*Setting consistent standards for our industry*

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