

Technical Information: Compost as a Landscape Mulch

This process consists of applying a compost mulch to the soil surface following planting activities. This specification applies to the mulching of various types of plant materials, including trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants and bulbs.

Compost standards

Fairfield's compost meets the requirements of the British Standards Institution Publicity Available Specification (PAS) 100 (link to PAS100 page), which guarantees an appropriate and safe product.

Our compost meets the minimum standards of PAS 100, and the PAS 100 specification limits on stones, weed seeds and physical and chemical contaminants.

Compost specification for use in mulching:

The specification below sets out further requirements, in addition to BSI PAS 100, for the use of compost in this specific application.

Horticultural parameters	Reported as (units of measure)	Recommended range
pH*	pH units (1:5 water extract)	6.0 – 9.0
Electrical conductivity	µS/cm or mS/m (1:5 water extract)	3000 µS/cm or 300 mS/m max
Moisture content	% m/m of fresh weight	35 – 55
Organic matter content	% dry weight basis	>30
Particle sizing	% m/m of air-dried sample passing the selected mesh aperture size	99% pass through 75mm screen <25 pass through 10mm screen
Contaminant parameters	Various	Meet BSI PAS 100 Criteria

* The pH level of Fairfield's compost is 7.0

How to use compost mulch material:

Uniformly apply compost mulch over the entire treatment area, or in a one metre circle around the plant. Apply the compost mulch at a 25 - 75 mm layer over the area to be treated (2.5 – 7.5 m³ per 100 m²), or in a one metre circle around a singular plant (20 – 60 litres per tree). Apply mulch as soon as possible after planting, applying it closely around plant stems but not against them. Water plant(s) in thoroughly prior to mulching, then again after mulching.

It is important to note that the addition of a compost mulch will reduce the required frequency of watering. In many cases, applying a compost mulch may reduce post planting fertilization, as the compost mulch will supply some soluble nutrients (when a stable compost is applied at recommended rates).

Footnotes:

The Landscape Architect/Designer shall specify the compost mulch application rate depending upon soil conditions and quality, plant tolerances, and manufacturer's recommendations. For most projects, uniformly apply a 25 - 75 mm layer of compost mulch over the area to be treated, (2.5 – 7.5 m³ per 100 m²). The application rates above are typical for many plant species and sites.