



INTERNATIONAL
COMPOST
ALLIANCE

HEALTHY SOILS • HEALTHY PLANET

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**International Compost Awareness Week (May 1 – 7)
Launches Call to Action around the world**

- **International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) 2022, the largest and most comprehensive education initiative of the compost industry, takes place May 1-7;**
- **ICAW 2022's themes include 'S.O.S.: Save Our Soil, Save OurSelves' and 'Recipe for Regeneration: Compost'**
- **Every tonne of organics recycled removes one tonne of greenhouse emissions from the atmosphere.**

An international coalition of composting trade associations have sent out a call to action ahead of International Compost Awareness Week (May 1-7) to increase the recycling of organics and increase the use of compost.

The International Compost Alliance is engaging with compost organizations around the world and highlighting the positive climate benefits composting can bring. Each country celebrates International Compost Awareness Week differently, some choosing annual themes. This year, they include 'S.O.S.: Save Our Soils, Saves OurSelves' and 'Recipe for Regeneration: Compost'.

International Compost Awareness Week engages with advocates and volunteers around the world, hosting educational activities and working together to bring awareness to the benefits of recycling organics, including the importance of returning organic matter – compost – back to our soil.

Organics recycling is a highly affordable carbon capture tool which can be done at many different scales, which can also deliver added benefits in renewable energy production, improved water quality and conservation and food security.

Currently, over 83 million tonnes of biowaste are recycled every year around the world. Not only does this recycle over 1 million tonnes of plant macro-nutrients, but, through storing carbon in soil and offsetting fertilizer use, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 9 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents – an equivalent of driving an average car for 36 billion kilometers (23 billion miles); almost 95 thousand times the distance between the earth and the moon!

Ginny Black of the Compost Research & Education Foundation in the US, said: “*International Compost Awareness Week is a reason to celebrate the possible – recycling organics for the good of our Planet and ourselves. Whether at home, work or play, organics recycling creates valuable carbon-rich organic matter – compost – for return to our soils for carbon storage, water conservation, food security and improved nutrition.*”

Stefanie Siebert of the European Compost Network, on behalf of the International Compost Alliance, the global network of organics recycling organizations, said: “*Every country, business and person can help mitigate climate change by recycling their unavoidable food and garden waste into natural fertilizers and soil improvers. Despite our current success globally, our annual potential could be increased over 12-fold if all of the world’s unavoidable organic residuals were collected separately and composted.*”

Jenny Grant, Head of Organics and Natural Capital at the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology, said: “*We are at a crucial moment in our efforts to reach net zero which is why we are issuing a call for action. The message is simple, if we Save Our Soils, we can help Save OurSelves and future generations. Every tonne of organics that is recycled removes one tonne of greenhouse emissions from atmosphere. It really is a no-brainer – what is good for our soils is good for us too.*”

—ENDS—

Notes to editors

The international compost alliance is comprised of:

[The Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology \(REA\);](#)

[The Australian Organics Recycling Association \(AORA\);](#)

[Compost Council of Canada \(CCC\);](#)

[European Compost Network \(ECN\);](#)

[International Solid Waste Association \(ISWA\);](#)

[CRÉ - Composting and Anaerobic Digestion Association of Ireland;](#)

[WasteMINZ \(Waste Management Institute of New Zealand\);](#)

[The United States Composting Council \(USCC\);](#) and

[The Compost Research & Education Foundation \(CREF\).](#)

Background:

According to data from the World Bank, 5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2016 (1.6 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent) were generated from solid waste treatment and disposal with food waste accounting for nearly 50% of overall emissions. ([Trends in Solid Waste Management \(worldbank.org\)](#)) The recycling of unavoidable organic wastes could significantly help put the brakes on this significant source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Equally important are the climate stabilizing benefits realized when compost and organic matter are returned back to our soils. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 95% of our food is directly or indirectly produced on our soils with organic matter being fundamental to its overall health, soil structure, diversity and biological activity of soil organisms and plant nutrient availability.

While details vary amongst countries and continents on how they celebrate International Compost Awareness Week, the following facts and benefits about organics recycling and compost use transcend political and cultural boundaries:

- Soil health and productivity are dependent on organic matter in the form of compost or humus to provide the sustenance for the biological diversity in the soil. Plants depend on this 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 offers a significant answer to climate change mitigation. Compost's return to the soil serves as a "carbon bank," helping to store carbon thereby removing it from the atmosphere.
- Methane, a greenhouse gas twenty-five times as powerful as carbon dioxide, can be significantly reduced through the recycling of organics instead of their being landfilled.
- 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 diversion rates.