

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Compost as Cure-All

Compost as soil amendment. Compost as pollution filter. Compost as disease control. And now most recently, compost as erosion control. Is there anything compost can't do? Managers and employees at Filtrexx International, LLC are pleased that the use of compost's newest application has spread. The company's full-time business is using compost to prevent erosion along highways, at construction sites, and other transportation and building locations.

There are many advantages of using compost-based tools over conventional erosion control methods. In the first place, compost is simply more effective at controlling erosion than many other technologies. "Compost, when properly installed in long filter berms, has been shown to work better than silt fence in keeping both suspended and settleable solids out of water sources moving on the surface," says Rod Tyler, manager of Filtrexx.

Not only does compost do the job better than other materials, but it also has a variety of positive environmental qualities: it is natural, renewable, locally made, bio-based, and easily vegetated. The compost that Filtrexx uses comes from a number of different feedstocks, including yard trimmings, biosolids, and food scraps, reports Tyler, and complies with the standards set forth by the U.S. Composting Council.

Compost also has benefits involving time and money. Generally, the installation time for compost-based tools is less than traditional tools. Filter socks, for instance, can be filled off site, saving time in the field. Although the upfront cost might be greater than traditional tools, the overall price of compost-based tools can be less. Both compost filter berms and filter socks can be easily vegetated and incorporated into the landscape when the job is completed, so removal and disposal is unnecessary.

Unfortunately, most people are generally unaware of compost-based tools and often look at price over performance but Tyler hopes that Filtrexx's erosion control tool box will become as accepted as many other common best management practices currently in use. He envisions a very steep growth curve for erosion control with compost over the next 5 to 10 years.

For more information, see Filtrexx International's Web site at <www.filtrexx.com>.

