

*"The best compost for the lands
Is the wise master's feet and hands."*

Robert Herrick

REPORT: SEMINAR ON PRODUCING FERTILIZER FROM DOMESTIC SOLID WASTES AND ITS FUNCTION IN ARID AND URBAN GREEN BELTS

FIRST SEMINAR IN PRODUCING COMPOST, FEBRUARY 1991

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Increasing population and the needs of urban areas in developing countries are very serious and call for logical solutions. The world of waste is a reality which is directly related to culture, life style, nutrition, means of production and economics. Scattering huge amounts of solid waste along city streets can cause a multitude of problems and demonstrates the importance of improving modes of collection and utility in an economical and safe process.

Compost, or biofertilizer, is the remains of fermented waste from urban areas and agricultural solid waste. It is harmless for agricultural soils and can cause increases in soil productivity and top soil. Recent environmental movements and the anxiety of authorities about water and soil pollution have increased the demand for natural products. Biofertilizers are believed to be harmless natural products which cause stable conditions for agriculture. From another perspective, agricultural development in Iran faces many problems from limitations in reservoirs, water sources and soil. To increase agricultural independence and food production proportionately to population growth, the only remaining path is increasing soil productivity.

Such materials, because of their beneficial effects on physical, chemical, and biological characteristics can provide one of the most important roles in soil productivity. Use of biomaterials, including animal fertilizers, should be considered by authorities considering the extreme lack of biomaterials in arid and semi-arid soils. (More than 80% of Iran's agriculture falls in this category.)

The first seminar on producing compost was held on February 17 & 18, 1991 at Isfahan University. At this seminar the mayor of Isfahan and a representative from Isfahan Compost Plant announced that they are ready to lend their experience and knowledge in this field. They proposed setting up a research and information center to help solve the difficulties in this field.

Fourteen papers were presented by Iranian researchers including:

Ways of Producing Biofertilizer from Industrial Solid Wastes

The Function of Biomaterials in Fertility and Soil Productivity.

Following Governmental Standards and Regulations in Producing Compost.

Economic Effects from the Production of Compost and the Limitations of Imported Chemical Fertilizers. The Increase of Health and City Beautification from the Collection of Solid Waste.

We hope that such research will encompass all technical regulations and that a suitable manner for producing compost can remedy environmental problems caused by solid waste to result in increased income and productivity.

Editors' note: We recently contacted a representative from the Isfahan Compost Plant. Mr. Asghar Qurani stated that by mid-November two new processes will be operational in that plant: recovery of plastic waste and separation of sand and glass in the final stage. The plant hopes to fulfill some of the goals of the seminar by next spring.