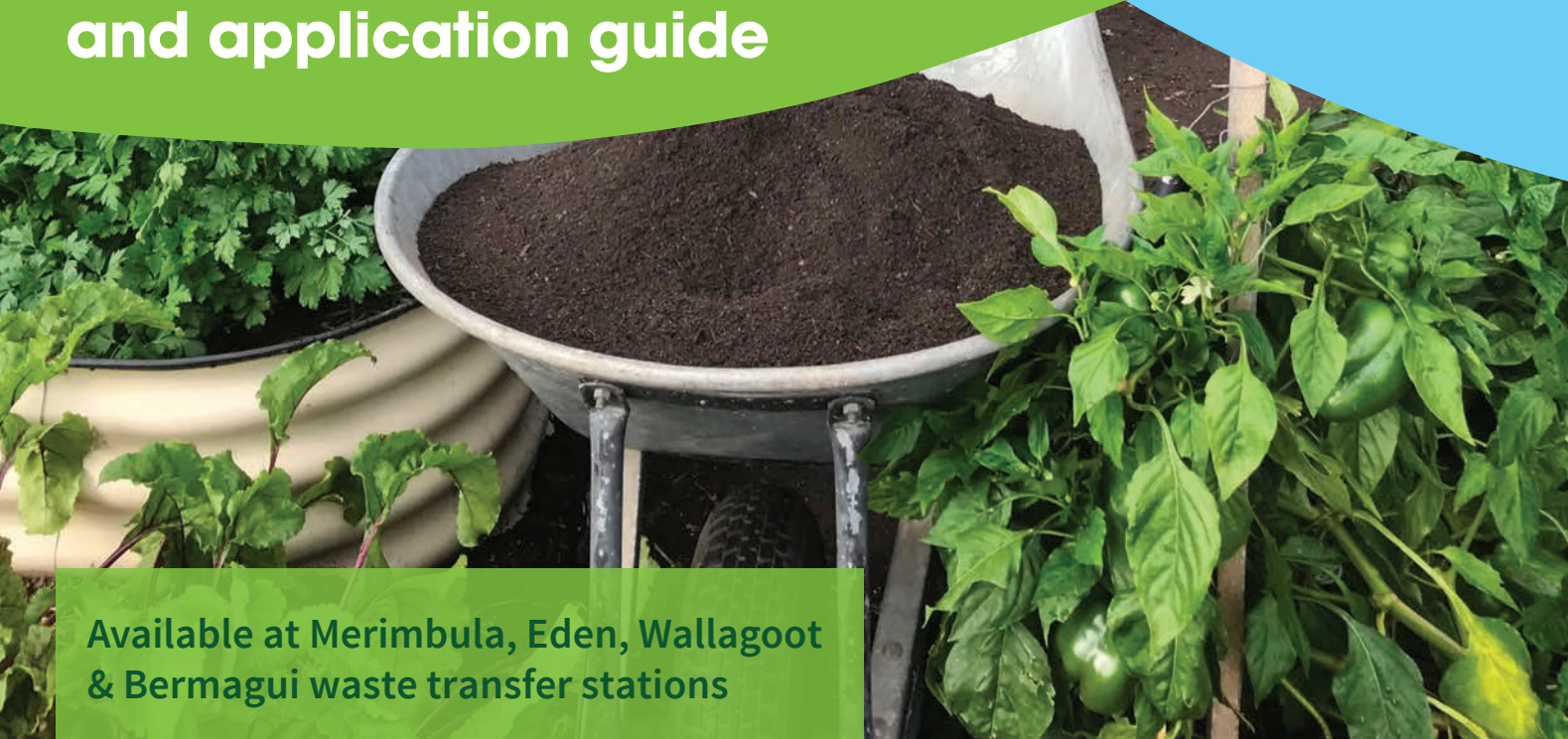


# FOGO compost tips and application guide



Available at Merimbula, Eden, Wallagoot & Bermagui waste transfer stations

**In 2018 the Bega Valley Shire Council introduced FOGO to turn their food and garden waste into high quality compost instead of putting it into landfill.**



## Benefits

### Compost

- Fertilising effect
- Introduces quality carbon into the soil.  
This in turn:
  - > Increases the health and activity of soil microbial populations
  - > Helps prevent plant disease
  - > Mobilises nutrients for plants
  - > Improves soil structure
- Improved moisture absorption
- Improved water holding capacity for plants

### Mulch

- Protects soil surface
- Prevents erosion
- Keeps your topsoil where you need it most
- Reduces run-off
- Reduces erosion
- Reduces evaporation
- Provides insulation for soil
  - > Keeps soil cooler in summer, reducing the effects of high temperatures which kill roots and soil biology
  - > Keeps soil warmer in winter which helps keep soil biology active when it's cold
- Renewable
- Environmentally friendly

## Tips for use

Due to the concentration of soluble plant nutrients in this product, the maximum rate of application on one occasion should be no more than 8 litres per square metre for sensitive plants and no more than 32 litres per square metre for tolerant plants. If digging compost into soil at least 10cm then these values can be doubled.

**GENERAL GARDEN SOIL IMPROVEMENT:** spread a 10-20mm thick layer of compost (10-20 litres per square metre) across soil surface and incorporate to a depth of 50-100mm.

**LANDSCAPING AND EROSION CONTROL:** apply a layer of mulch 50-100mm deep (50-100 litres per square metre) over whole area.

### TREES

#### Compost

**New native plantings:** apply 10% of the volume of the planting hole (for a planting hole of 100 litres, apply 10 litres of compost) to the base of the planting hole and blend 50:50 with existing soil.

\*Note that care must be taken with adding nutrients to native plants as some species are sensitive to increased phosphorus.

**New fruit and exotic tree plantings:** apply 20% of the volume of the planting hole (for a planting hole of 100 litres, apply 20 litres of compost) to the base of the planting hole and blend 50:50 with existing soil.

#### Mulch

**New or existing trees:** apply a layer of mulch 50-100mm deep (50-100 litres per square metre) and 300-600mm wide surrounding the trees.

### VEGGIE GARDENS

Spread a 10-20mm (10-20 litres per square metre) thick layer of compost across soil surface and incorporate to a depth of 50-100mm, then water thoroughly before planting.

- Ensure vegetables are planted according to their seasonality and provided with appropriate nutrition through species-specific fertilisers.

### FLOWER BEDS

#### Compost

Spread a 10-20mm thick layer of compost (10-20 litres per square metre) across soil surface and incorporate to a depth of 50-100mm, then water thoroughly before planting.

#### Mulch

Apply a layer of mulch 50mm deep (50 litres per square metre) over whole area.

### We don't recommend using FOGO compost to top-dress lawns

Although the Bega Valley's FOGO compost contamination rates are among the lowest in Australia, the quality of the end product is reliant on people 'choosing the right bin'. We decontaminate the FOGO waste by hand and have several other separation techniques the compost goes through as part of processing, but there are limitations on what we can remove. Broken glass and small pieces of plastic are particularly difficult to remove.

We are continually improving our processing systems to enable us to remove contaminants, and Council delivers community education programs which aim to inform, educate and inspire people to keep their FOGO bins contamination free.

## Understand your pH

Compost varies in pH for many reasons and it is important that gardeners, growers, landscapers and farmers know the pH of the compost they have purchased.

- Don't try and grow plants in pure compost, as they will struggle.
- Using just compost or too much compost in your garden soil will have detrimental effects regardless of the pH level.
- Generally, mature compost has a pH range between 5-8. If your compost pH is more than 8 then it is best to apply it more sparingly, or add other material to bring the pH down.
- If you sit your compost in the corner of your yard and don't use it for a while, please recheck the pH level when it comes time for you to use the compost in your garden project.

## Nutrient Chart

Nutrient.....	Compost
Nitrogen .....	1.08 %
Phosphorus .....	6.4%
Potassium .....	0.72 %
Organic Carbon .....	16.5 %
Zinc .....	209 mg/kg
Copper .....	18.5 mg/kg
Sodium .....	0.21 %

# Choose the right bin

...with a bit of help from the Bega Valley Waste Warriors



**Keep  
these top 5  
contaminants  
out of FOGO**

- ✗ Plastic, including soft plastic & food packaging
- ✗ Glass
- ✗ Cans & metal
- ✗ Nappies
- ✗ Building material such as wood, concrete & bricks





**Bega Valley Shire Council FOGO compost and mulch is pasteurised and is sold under the NSW EPA 'compost' Resource Recovery Order. The current typical analysis for our compost and mulch, which includes pH levels, is available on the Bega Valley Waste APP and on Council's website.**

## **Pasteurisation**

FOGO Compost is pasteurised and meets the Australian Standard for Compost, Soil Conditioners and Mulches (AS 4454 - 2012).

Pasteurisation is a heat cycling process that sanitises the organic material.

Microbial activity creates heat as the material breaks down and temperatures above 55 degrees Celsius are maintained to kill any viable plant propagules (eg weed seeds) and pathogens (eg harmful bacteria) throughout the duration of the composting process.

The pasteurisation process ensures the compost complies with the chemical, physical, organic and pathogen containment provisions as specified by AS 4454 for unrestricted use and land application.

## **Health warning**

- This product contains micro-organisms
- Keep product moist and avoid breathing in dust or mists by wearing a particulate mask
- This product is made from the contents of the community's green (FOGO) bins and has a low risk of containing contaminant materials such as plastic/ glass shards/stones/metal sharps
- Metal sharps could include nails, screws, wire or hypodermic syringes
- Wear appropriate gloves and footwear as a precautionary measure
- Wash hands immediately after use

**Want to know more about Bega Valley Shire Council's compost and mulch production?**

**Call** (02) 6499 2222 **Visit** [www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/waste](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/waste)

**Follow** our Facebook page [@BegaValleyWasteandRecycling](https://www.facebook.com/BegaValleyWasteandRecycling)

