

[www.mastercomposter.com's](http://www.mastercomposter.com's)

2005

# SOIL SURVEY RESULTS



# **2005 Soil Survey Results**

**1<sup>st</sup> Edition**

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## Introduction

In the summer of 2005, [www.mastercomposter.com](http://www.mastercomposter.com) conducted a survey to determine what composters know about the effect of compost on soil, and how certain they are of their knowledge.

The following instructions headed the survey:

*The following claims have been made by at least one person regarding the benefits of compost. That person may have been a snake-oil salesman. That person may have been a knowledgeable resource. Do you believe each statement is a myth or a fact?*

Respondents were shown 8 statements about compost and asked to give one of four answers to reflect their belief about the given statement:

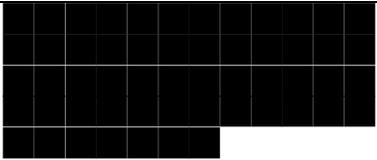
- a. I believe it works and I can EXPLAIN how it works.
- b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.
- c. I don't believe it.
- d. I'm not sure.

The ninth question further tested the certainty of composters' knowledge by asking "Out of 8 questions, how many are you certain you got right?"

Responses to all questions are given in this report.

**Survey Statement #1: Compost improves drainage if your soil has a drainage problem. But it also improves water retention if your soil drains too quickly.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	59	55%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	45	42%	
c. I don't believe it	0	0%	
d. I'm not sure.	3	3%	

**Survey Statement #2: Compost makes water more available to plant roots, i.e., soil water is more easily taken up by them.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	45	42%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	49	46%	
c. I don't believe it	5	5%	
d. I'm not sure.	8	7%	

**Survey Statement #3: If your soil is acidic, compost will make it more alkaline. If your soil is alkaline, compost will make it more acidic.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	26	24%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	32	30%	
c. I don't believe it	19	18%	
d. I'm not sure.	30	28%	

**Survey Statement #4: Compost suppresses diseases and parasites in both plants and animals.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	32	30%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	49	46%	
c. I don't believe it	14	13%	
d. I'm not sure.	12	11%	

**Survey Statement #5: Compost removes oil, grease, and heavy metals from storm water runoff.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	11	10%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	19	18%	
c. I don't believe it	34	32%	
d. I'm not sure.	43	40%	

**Survey Statement #6: Compost degrades or completely eliminates petroleum products in contaminated soil.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 105**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	7	7%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	12	11%	
c. I don't believe it	44	42%	
d. I'm not sure.	42	40%	

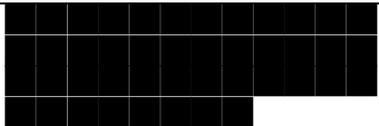
**Survey Statement #7: Compost binds heavy metals in soil so that they do not contaminate water resources, plants, nor humans.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 106**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	8	8%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	15	14%	
c. I don't believe it	33	31%	
d. I'm not sure.	50	47%	

**Survey Statement #8: Compost has been used to convert explosives-contaminated soils at munitions sites into contaminant-free soil.**

**Total Votes for this Question: 107**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. I believe it and I can EXPLAIN how it works.	11	10%	
b. I believe it but CANNOT explain how it works.	25	23%	
c. I don't believe it	24	22%	
d. I'm not sure.	47	44%	

**Final Survey Question: Out of 8 questions, how many are you certain you got right?**

**Total Votes for this Question: 106**

Answers	Votes	Percent	
a. 0	10	9%	
b. 1	4	4%	
c. 2	15	14%	
d. 3	14	13%	
e. 4	18	17%	
f. 5	14	13%	
g. 6	8	8%	
h. 7	4	4%	
i. 8	19	18%	

## **So, What are the Real Answers?????????**

There is not enough room here to provide an adequate explanation of each of these issues. However, we plan to discuss these issues in upcoming soil classes.

Join us for the first soil class, a 4-week eCourse which begins August 1, 2005. This is the basic, introductory soil class. No prior knowledge of soil is required. We will discuss soil in simple, easy-to-understand terms so that composters may better understand the processes which occur as compost improves their soil.



**SOIL -- SUPER SIMPLE!:**  
**Understanding HOW compost improves our soil**  
**Class Starts August 1, 2005. [Register Today!](#)**

**[Click here for More Information](#)**

## Additional Materials Available

### eBooks

*2005 Compost Tea Survey Report* (full report) has both Basic Statistics and Cross-Question Statistics with commentary.

<http://www.mastercomposter.com/site/teareport.html>



#### *Make Your Own Compost Brewer and Brew Compost Tea at Home!*

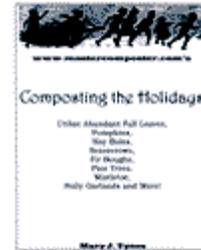
gives instructions to build your own compost tea brewer with less than US\$15 of components and a bucket! Also included are details on safety, choosing components, creating a compost that will yield the best tea, brewing procedure, and proper application to your garden. More information at

[www.booklocker.com/p/books/1812.html?s=soil-surv-rpt](http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/1812.html?s=soil-surv-rpt)



*Composting the Holidays* helps you use holiday decorations to create mulch and compost for your garden. Utilize the abundance of autumn leaves, jack-o-lanterns, hay bales, scarecrows, fir boughs, pine trees, mistletoe, holly wreaths, and more! An entire chapter on leaves! Compost food in a pile, using decorative pumpkins as our example! From autumn leaves and harvest festivals to winter celebrations, so many materials may be composted! The eBook's entire Index is included in the free excerpt available at

[www.booklocker.com/p/books/1842.html?s=soil-surv-rpt](http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/1842.html?s=soil-surv-rpt)



*How to Help a Grieving Friend* provides experienced-based advice on what to do and say – and what *not* to do and say – for a bereaved friend. These practical and specific solutions may be downloaded immediately in eBook format. More information at

[www.booklocker.com/p/books/1596.html?s=soil-surv-rpt](http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/1596.html?s=soil-surv-rpt)

### Newsletter

*[Digging Deeper Into the Pile](http://www.mastercomposter.com/site/news.html)*, our bi-monthly newsletter, features advice, research and product reviews related to backyard composting. (To subscribe to newsletter, click here: [www.mastercomposter.com/site/news.html](http://www.mastercomposter.com/site/news.html) )

### Updated List of Available Materials

More titles are planned but were not yet available as of this book's publication date. Check this link to see which books are currently available:

[www.mastercomposter.com/ebooks/index.html](http://www.mastercomposter.com/ebooks/index.html)