



LEPS

Langley Environmental Partners Society



Horse Manure Composting Program

Improving Manure Management Practices

Doing your part to ensure that our horses' "waste" does not threaten human health or our environment doesn't always mean that you have to completely change your current manure management practices. Sometimes one small change can make all the difference.

Below are some tips to help you improve your current manure management practices.

Cover your pile

In the Lower Mainland, an uncovered manure pile, on average, has 1 meter of rain fall on it each year. As the water runs through the pile it picks up significant amounts of organic materials, nitrate-nitrogen, ammonia and other organic compounds generating a pollutant capable of contaminating surface and groundwater. By covering your pile, even with a tarp, you will be helping to ensure the health of your community and environment.

Consider location

Evaluate the location of your stored manure. Consider whether your manure is located close to a drainage ditch, stream, or small tributary. Moving your pile away from watercourses on your property helps ensure the health of aquatic life such as salmon. Even if your watercourse does not contain fish, it may be a significant upstream source of food for fish.

Manage your pile

Manure piles need to be managed regularly in order to have them compost successfully. Successful composting requires appropriate conditions such as adequate oxygen. Piles left to sit for great lengths of time may not compost properly as the organisms needed to break down the materials will not be able to survive unless conditions are appropriate. Managing your pile by providing it with oxygen and correct moisture content can help you ensure you are creating good quality compost. Managed piles also have less odour and fewer insects hanging around them than unmanaged piles.

Spreading practices

Keep in mind that it is much better to spread composted manure than raw manure. The nutrients in composted manure are much more readily available to your grasses than those in raw manure. Spreading composted manure can also ensure better animal health. Compost piles reach temperatures that kill most parasites whereas raw manure can have high populations of parasites that can be ingested by your horses.