



CALRECYCLE & CALTRANS FIRE TOOLBOX

Benefits of the Use of Compost and Mulch Products on Fire-Damaged Land

- Compost helps restore soils by improving its physical, chemical, and biological properties. Whether the compost is incorporated or applied as a protective layer, soils treated with compost are rich in slow-release nutrients, see improved water infiltration and retention, and benefit from an environment where plants thrive. Allowing plants to develop healthy, extensive, and deep roots further improves soil structure and prevents erosion.
- Compost can bind and adsorb contaminants already in soil, including heavy metals, fuels, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, making it an ideal treatment for soil remediation (also known as bioremediation) and for filtration of runoff from contaminated land.
- Compost amendments and mulch help protect fire-damaged lands by protecting the soil from the erosive impact of heavy rain.
- Organic matter in compost helps soils increase water infiltration and water holding capacity, providing seeds with more water to germinate.
- Some nutrients in compost, while tightly bound in organic complexes, are highly soluble in synthetic fertilizers and rapidly leach into soil and water; this means nutrients in compost will not easily wash away in the first rainstorm and will be there longer than synthetic fertilizers to sustain plant growth and health.
- Compost helps establish vegetation and treat stormwater runoff. When soil can re-grow its protective vegetative layer quickly, the result is less erosion, cleaner waterways, and less time and money to dig out critical infrastructure.
- Mulch suppresses weeds and moderates soil temperature.
- The benefits discussed above accrue in applications of finished, mature compost and are not associated with applications of uncomposted green materials. Help ensure product quality by purchasing your compost from a facility that follows CalRecycle regulations for pathogen reduction and metals testing and is permitted by or registered with a [Local Enforcement Agency](#) that follows [CalRecycle regulations](#) for pathogen reduction and metals testing.

*Contact ACP at danwyldernoble@gmail.com for more information
about where to purchase compost products.*