# Turn your waste heap into organic manure step by step

**Manures are the organic materials derived from animal, human and plant residues which contain plant nutrients in complex organic forms.**

BY DAN WANDERA

Households engaged in farming practices should not let bio-waste in backyard garbage heaps go to waste, experts have advised.

Mr Frank Matovu, a farmer consultant and soil management coordinator at Bethany Land Institute – Luwero, encourages farmers to be innovative and maximize resources at their respective disposal without over stretching resources on synthetic fertilisers at the expense of the cost free natural matter that has already been discarded as waste matter.

The bio-waste can include the grasses trimmed or cut from the overgrown vegetation at the gardens and compound as well as the bio-waste from the kitchen and other household waste that naturally decompose under natural conditions.

"This is what you need to kick-start the process after site selection," he says. "One also needs the green matter (green leaves) that may include pumpkin leaves, sunflower leaves and many other legume plants that possess hairy surfaces. These have the potential to manufacture nitrogen, an essential element for organic manure."

### The steps

According to Mr Matovu, the area must be flat to ensure that waste collection is not easily washed away by running water. Depending on the size of the heap, pieces of dry sticks or twigs are placed on the flat ground. Because you have already mobilized the bio-waste from different areas ready in one place. The bio- waste material is placed on top of the sticks to aid in aeration.

"Because the waste material is bio, avoid plastics, glasses among other non-biodegradable material from getting into the waste heap," he says, adding that one should then place a layer of the bio- waste; add a layer of the green leaves that have turned brown, add some cow dung to increase on the bio-multiplier.

"You can add some wood ash to help prevent some diseased matter that could make its way into the compost. You will need to add some water into the heap which by this time will be at least three-weeks. The waste heap should be turned every two weeks, a process that allows the mixing of the outer material with the inner waste material into the centre of the waste heap."

The heap can be covered using grasses or any material that can allow some aeration and water penetration. Bio material that could be leaves can be used for covering the heap. The composting can take between two to three months to make good organic manure, farmer experts reveal.

Farmers are advised not to allow micro- organism repellants, especially plant material that has capacity to repel particular plant micro-organisms.

The compost that almost resembles soil matter can then be directly transferred to a well prepared garden.

### Why the organic manure

Because the composting process for the manure is disease free, organic manure once applied will help in the suppression of diseases that could attack plants. The manure quickly enhances formation of soil microbial activity. This helps in fighting plant diseases, the expert reveals.

The compost manure is believed to be the eco- friendly fertilizer that quickly enriches the missing soil nutrients. It is also believed to improve the soil structure, boost water retention among other advantages.

On the other hand, Mr Abraham Ssekandi, a farmer based at Namakofu village, Zirobwe Subcounty in Luweero District says the economic value of the compost manure is full filling. Ssekandi who now owns a consultancy firm earns money from homemade compost manure sold to people that own urban vegetable gardens, flower pots business and those landscaping.

"The gardens need the compost manure to quickly mature," he says.

Through the more than 20-years of farm practice, Ssekandi has reduced pests and disease attacks on his farm that purely uses the compost manure made from the usual bio waste material. "When people see me collecting the material from gardens, compounds among other places, they mistake me for an idler gathering rubbish and transferring the garbage on my own farm. I have found fortune in composting and making use of the compost material when chance strikes," he says.

Ssekandi earns between Shs350,000 to Shs400,000 per ton of compost made at his farm. He also supplies smaller portions of compost manure to farmers and any other individual in need of the organic compost. He is not distracted by arguments that the process takes a long time and requires patience and strict adherence to the selective procedure of ensuring that only bio waste material finds its way to the waste heap.

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**MAJOR SOURCES OF MANURES.**

- Cattle shed wastes- dung, urine and slurry from biogas plants
- Human habitation wastes-night soil, human urine, town refuse, sewage, sludge and sullage
- Poultry litter, droppings sheep and goat
- Slaughterhouse wastes-b meal, me meal, blo meal, hor and hoof meal, fish wastes
- Bypro ducts of industri cakes, bagasse press m fruit an vegeta proces waste
- Cro waste garca trash, stubb other mate
- W cinth and t
- G nur and leaf rin



**Compost ready for application in the garden. Made from natural ingredients such as compost, manure, and plant materials, these fertilisers are free from synthetic chemicals and safe for environment.** PHOTO/DAN WANDERA