



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Start composting your organic waste

Immediate Release

03 November 2015



*Caption: Reliance Compost based in Paarl, Western Cape produces certified organic compost by composting municipal green waste and alien vegetation. The organisation chip and transports garden waste from drop-off facilities and landfills in Cape Town to ultimately reduce methane gas from escaping into the environment. The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA's) Collection and Transport Interest Group (CTIG) recently visited Corona farm where Reliance Compost is currently rehabilitating 400 hectares of sterile soil which was depleted after decades of mining sand and gravel.*

*South Africa's landfill airspace is fast approaching its end, making it ever more important to reduce, divert and recycle waste streams. According to the Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) composting of organic waste is fundamental as it closes the loop of nutrients in the environmental system.*

Stuart Gower-Jackson, Senior Environmental Scientist at Jeffares & Green and member of the IWMSA, says, "We need to make every effort to divert waste from landfill sites. When organic waste breaks down in landfills, it produces methane gas, a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. There are numerous benefits of composting organic waste as it produces mulch, soil amendments, organic fertilisers and blended products that can assist in saving costs such as chemical fertilisers."

Organic waste suitable for composting includes garden waste such as grass, leaves, plants, branches and tree trunks. General food and wood waste can also be included as well as straw, manure, mulch, paper-processing sludge and non-synthetic textiles. Materials that are not suitable for composting includes hazardous waste such as cleaning products, pesticides, broken glass, medicine and treated

timber. Painted wood and recyclable materials (glass, metal, aluminium, paper, plastics and cardboard) are also not suitable for composting.

Prof Suzan Oelofse, President of the IWSMA, says, “Composting of organic waste is relatively simple and we encourage residents to set up their own composting system at home.” She indicates that it usually takes up to a year for the composting heap to fully decompose, with little turning and effort.

Here she gives some tips to start your own composting heap at home:

1. **Set out an area in your yard:** The size should be approximately one cubic meter.
2. **Start mixing your waste:** Mix two parts brown (dry leaves, small twigs, straw) with one part green (grass clippings, food waste).
3. **Make large pieces smaller:** Cut or break any twigs and large pieces of fruit and vegetable waste so that materials can break down faster.
4. **Add water:** Water your compost to keep it moist, but not saturated.
5. **Turn your compost:** Compost needs air. Turning the compost will help to break it down and will prevent it from smelling unpleasant.
6. **Rich soil:** When the compost is ready, it should look and smell like rich soil. Use finished compost to feed your garden, flowers, potted plants and lawn.

“Composting is a wonderful way to keep soil fertile and helps reduce waste sent to landfill sites. We encourage everyone to start their composting garden this summer,” concludes Oelofse.

For more information on how to compost, visit [www.iwmsa.co.za](http://www.iwmsa.co.za). The IWMSA is also on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/iwmsa>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/IWMSA>).

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