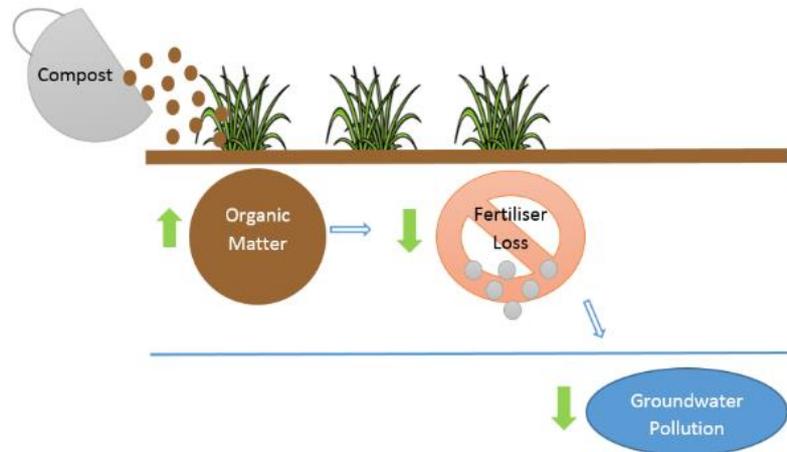




## Keeping the soil healthy

### TALKING COMPOST

FYI compost is the single most important supplement you can give your garden soil. Applying compost to your garden increases the amount of organic matter, which consequently reduces fertiliser leaching into the groundwater supply that can cause contamination (diagram to the right explains this process). By re-using organic waste that would otherwise end up in a landfill, compost turns a waste problem into an environmental benefit for all.



Creating your own compost or purchasing from a supplier is a huge help to the environment and here's how:

- Greenhouse gas emissions that would normally come off a landfill are reduced
- High quality compost is used to improve NZ's productive soils
- Valuable landfill space is saved

If you can't spare the time to make your own compost there are plenty of places that sell packaged compost. Want to know a little more about how compost is made by large-scale companies? Living Earth is NZ's main provider of organic waste processing services. They make their compost by collecting and recycling greenwaste and brewing it into plant-nourishing goodness.

Living Earth is based in both Auckland and Christchurch with their target market ranging from home gardeners, commercial companies to rural farmers. Within the Christchurch area the plant receives nearly 50,000 tonnes of foodwaste and greenwaste per year from households' "Love Organics" collection. The household collection is processed over a period of 7-10 days. In Auckland however, greenwaste material is brewed in windrows and takes 3-4 months to transform into a usable compost. Living Earth markets more than 100,000 cubic metres of compost and compost product; that is equivalent of a rugby field 20 metres deep in compost! Demand in Christchurch has outstripped production as Canterbury farmers and gardeners are among the biggest users of Living Earth compost.

Compost is something we all know about but truly don't know the real benefits it has towards our garden health and the overall health of the environment. With a little insight into the bonuses it has for your garden why not have a go at making it or sourcing it from a local provider.

