

Tip Sheet: Grounds For Your Garden

Coffee grounds can provide a valuable source of nutrition for your garden. The proper amount to be used depends on the condition of your soil and what you are growing. Check with a local gardening expert or your local parks to see what is best for your garden. Here are a few general tips:

Applying coffee grounds directly to your garden:

Coffee grounds can be applied directly as a top dressing to n-nitrogen loving plants like azaleas, lettuces, most perennials, and allium plants. Adding brown material such as leaves and dried grass to the mulch will help balance the nutrition of your soil.

Mixing coffee grounds in your compost:

Coffee grounds act as a green material with a carbon-nitrogen (C-N) ratio of 20-1. Combined with browns such as leaves and straw, coffee grounds generate heat and will speed up the compost process.

Using coffee grounds in your worm bin:

Worms fed with coffee grounds and other vegetarian materials will flourish.

Most of the acidity in coffee is removed during the brewing process. Used grounds have an average pH of 6.9. Use your grounds within 3 weeks to capture the most nutritional value.

For more information, check out these websites:

- soilfoodweb.com
- starbucks.com/aboutus/compost.asp
- gardening.wsu.edu/stewardship/compost/coffee.htm
- gardenweb.com
- oldgrowth.org/compost
- cityfarmer.org



What's in Coffee Grounds?

Starbucks commissioned a study in 1995 to better understand the make up of the organic matter we call coffee grounds. The following is the result of the analysis performed by the University of Washington, College of Forest Resources:

Primary Nutrients

Nitrogen	1.45%
Phosphorus	ND ug/g
Potassium	1204 ug/g

Secondary Nutrients

Calcium	389 ug/g
Magnesium	448 ug/g
Sulfur	high ug/g

Terms: ND = indicates sample is below detection limit

ug/g= microgram / gram

