



With water conservation and management becoming a critical issue in suburban garden development, gardeners must consider carefully the options available to them when purchasing garden mix or soil conditioners. The key to the purchase is knowing exactly what your requirements are within the garden, and be specific about these needs when talking with our staff.

There are many different products available, and each is designed with a specific use in mind. Consider for example the following points;

- What type of plants are being installed? Native / exotic etc.
- What is the garden situation? Is it general garden beds/planter box/vege garden?
- Will irrigation be installed?
- Is drainage adequate?
- Additional specific information. E.g. is weight an issue in the case of planter box situations.

Not only will this help determine which mix best suits your needs, but it also helps build additional knowledge about how best to develop your garden. Seek out the advice from our qualified horticulturalists, and don't be afraid to ask every question you have.

With the extended period of low rainfall in many regions throughout Australia, most existing garden soils will be showing signs of excessive dryness leading to the soil becoming 'hydrophobic', or water repellent. This can be overcome with the incorporation of a soil conditioner based on well composted organic matter.

Soil conditioners are used essentially to add organic matter to sandy soils to improve water holding, or are added to clay soils break them up and improve drainage. In general, soil conditioners should preferably be applied to a depth of 100mm, and then incorporated to a depth of 200mm. This results in a maximum of 50% by volume being organic matter.

Remember, there are many different soil conditioners on the market and once again it is critical that you are specific about your needs, and seek qualified advice.

An important note to add here is that whilst most compost products suit most plants, some native plants, (particularly plants belonging to the Proteaceae family such as Grevilleas), cannot tolerate excessive phosphorus. This rules out the use of animal manures for example as a soil conditioner in this instance. Professional suppliers will have a wide range of options regarding soil conditioners.

Whether buying garden mix or compost, seek out quality products. Be aware that like the Australian Standard for potting mixes, which is signified by the 'red ticks' seen on potting mix bags, there are Australian Standards for garden mix, composts and mulches.