



Windy City

Biosolids/Compost

Spring 2021

In This Issue

- 2 Brownfield Restoration Initiative
- 3 Start/Boost your turf!
How well do you know our EQ Compost
- 4 Pre-Covid 19 Events
Compost is available now

Use of Biosolids for Maintenance of Vegetation in Various Landscapes

It's spring and time to start thinking about how EQ biosolids can work into

- **Community gardens** - Create raised bed gardens with 50% EQ Compost and 50% soil mix. Add and mix 3" EQ Compost to in-ground beds.

your landscaping projects! Biosolids are valuable resources for recycling and reuse in numerous places in our local communities such as parks, golf courses, construction sites, brownfield restoration, home gardens, and community gardens.

To help you get started, here are some ways we recommend using EQ products in all types of landscaping, and check out the section on "Start/Boost your turf" to learn how to establish turf with EQ Biosolids.

- **Parks** - Topdress your athletic fields and grassy areas with EQ Biosolids. Add EQ Compost to your garden beds.
- **Golf courses** - Topdress your rough and fairways with EQ Biosolids. Mix 10% EQ Biosolids with sand to establish new putting greens.
- **Construction sites, including commercial and residential developments, highway construction, and Green Infrastructure projects** - Use EQ Biosolids to boost organic matter in seeding beds after site completion to have a fast and dense establishment of turfgrass. Improve drainage and stormwater management by including EQ Compost in your soil mix for bioswales and raingardens. Finish garden bed with EQ Compost.
- **Brownfield restoration** - Incorporate EQ Biosolids into your topsoil at 3" EQ Biosolids to 6" soil.
- **Home gardens** - Revitalize your lawn with a top dressing of EQ Biosolids. Establish or improve flower and vegetable gardens with EQ Compost.



Photos: Top left - Ornamental peppers: Use of EQ Compost in garden bed helps produce beautiful plants.

Top right - Trees can be established using EQ Compost. Use the compost as an amendment around the base of the tree to help retain moisture.

Larger photo below - Western Springs: EQ Biosolids improve growing conditions for turf on athletic fields and home lawns.

Brownfield Restoration Initiative



Harlem Brownfield Site: A property formerly leased to store petrochemicals, this MWRD site is now reserved as a research site for optimizing soil improvements by using biosolids to reduce contamination.

Have you ever noticed a vacant property that previously had purpose, but now has become an eye-sore in the community? Some sites in our neighborhood are classified as brownfields, or sites that are degraded and contaminated due to former industrial uses, preventing further use or development.

Using MWRD's EQ biosolids to restore Chicago brownfield land can lead to a transformation of some of the degraded land of the city into a useful, productive urban ecosystem. Restoring the soil with biosolids can provide benefits that improve soil health, which leads to increased ecosystem function both above and below ground. The reinstated ecosystem function advances degradation of contaminants by supporting the microbes and plants that break them down, along with the added organic matter that helps immobilize many contaminants. It will also reduce runoff and improve local water quality.

We are working with the Calumet Collaborative, an organization dedicated to advancing the Calumet region through sustainable development, to identify sites using a mapping

tool. They are also facilitating the connections of partners who are interested in restoring brownfield sites to parks, urban gardens, wildlife areas, or green spaces that provide valuable ecosystem function. If you are interested in revitalizing any brownfield sites in your community, please contact us; our EQ biosolids can help make this transformation a reality.

We are establishing a long-term research and demonstration site, which will be run in tandem with observations at sites throughout the Chicago area that receive biosolids for remediation. At these sites, you can learn about the contributions of biosolids in rebuilding soil health, ecosystem function, and growth and establishment of native plant species on degraded urban soil. Our partners, potential biosolids users, and the general public can soon come to our demonstration sites to gain more awareness about the benefits and safety of biosolids for achieving greater bi-directional benefits from local use of the biosolids resource.



Each batch of EQ Compost is tested to ensure it meets all of the standards to be classified as exceptional quality. This means all compost distributed by MWRD is beneficial to the soil and safe for humans and ecosystems

Start/Boost your turf!

This is a good time of year to improve your lawn. EQ air-dried biosolids are just the thing to create a thick, vibrant green lawn. Here are some recommendations.

1. If you are establishing seeds in a new area, use EQ biosolids at a rate of 3" and till into 6" of soil. Then apply the grass seed, incorporating it into the biosolids layer.
2. If you are establishing sod, prepare the soil as you would with seed, tilling 3" of EQ air-dried biosolids into 6" of soil. Lay the sod on the surface and follow your normal routine.
3. If you need to revive existing turf, topdress the area with EQ air-dried biosolids at a rate of 1/4"-1/2", based on how compacted the soil is and how bare the grass looks. Use a higher rate for a more damaged lawn.



4. If you want to keep a good performance of turfgrass on existing grass without using synthetic chemicals, topdress with our natural product EQ air-dried biosolids, at a rate of 1/4".

How well do you know our EQ Compost?

1. Which of these is NOT a way EQ biosolids can reduce contaminants in brownfield sites?
 - A. Improve microbial community
 - B. Add chemicals that act like soap
 - C. Increase plant growth
 - D. Dilute the contaminants
2. True or False, area golf courses use EQ air-dried biosolids to improve turfgrass and rootzone health?
3. What is EQ compost made from?
 - A. Wood chips and biosolids
 - B. Food scraps and biosolids
 - C. Yard waste, food scraps, and biosolids
 - D. Wood chips and food scraps

Answers on back page.

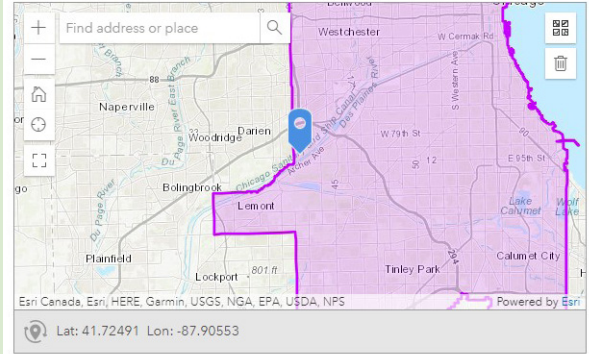
The rundown: new EQ compost ordering system with GIS

This year, you will find the order form for EQ compost a little different. We have updated our ordering system to include a GIS component that will allow you to click the map, indicating where you want your compost delivered. This new system will help streamline the order and delivery process to increase the number of orders we are able to deliver each week.

You will also see new options in your order, such as what you plan to use your compost for. This will help us understand how you use EQ compost so we can continue to provide you with the most relevant information!

Please indicate the delivery location on the map. Delivery is only available within MWRD's jurisdiction. This is indicated by the purple boundary on the map.

You can use the crosshair to allow the map attempt to locate you using your device's GPS*



Compost is available now!

MWRD compost is available through self-service pickups at six of our water reclamation plants. See the location and times at <https://mwrdd.org/eq-compost> and bring your own bucket and shovel! Large load pickups can be obtained at the Harlem Avenue Solids Management Area in Forest View by scheduling in advance through the link on the website.

For more information on the use of EQ biosolids or to include them in your projects, please visit our website or contact:

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Answers

1. B.
2. True.
3. A.

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