

Compost comes full circle

T&R Contracting arrangement with Sechelt composters a boon for gardeners

The next time you drop some food waste or yard waste at Powell River's Town Centre recycling depot, pat yourself on the back for helping a local gardener.

Those scraps, as well as fish carcasses from the Lois Lake fish farm, are part of what makes Salish Soils some of the richest compost Powell River has ever seen.

"I love gardening, and I used this product and I grew so many Long English cucumbers last year I was giving them away with compost here," said Bonnie Robinson of T&R Contracting, the exclusive distributor of Salish Soils in Powell River. "I believe in this product."

Composted food scraps and garden waste go into Raincoast Blend, an ideal landscaping mix. Fish and forest waste go into the Original Salish Fish Compost, created in Sechelt under the watchful eye of Aaron Joe, owner of Salish Soils. The composts made in Sechelt are the base of other soils mixed at T&R (see sidebar).

At Salish Soil's yard near Sechelt, what you see as food waste, their "brewmaster" sees as the ingredients for beautiful soil.

Aaron says a comparison with craft beer is not far-fetched. "One's a compost master, one's a brewmaster. They make really good beer or really good soil. There's an art to it."

At any given time, the operation has 3,000 tonnes of soil in the making, with about 1,000 tonnes per batch, and each batch yielding about 700 yards of compost. After the compost has cooled for a few months, it is tested independently for fecal coliforms, metals or other potential pollutants, as well as for pH, carbon and nitrogen.

Originally, the operation started out making fish compost. "We built our brand on fish compost" thanks in part to "a great partnership" with the Lois Lake fish farm. "West Coast Fish Culture (now Agri-Marine) partnered with us when it wasn't trendy to partner with First Nations," said Aaron, a member of the shíshálh Nation.

He says returning the compost to Powell River via T&R Contracting is "closing the loop. It comes full circle."

"I'm really happy to bring back to Powell River ingredients that are from Powell River. It's much better than bringing ingredients from far away. It comes full circle," says Bonnie.

The closer-to-home compost replaces some items that were being brought from Vancouver, although the popular, light and clean double-screened Harvest brand garden blend and turf blend are still available.



Mulches

Additionally, T&R's garden centre has three different mulches (aged, cedar and fir) and mushroom manure.

Rock on

For gardens, pathways and landscaping, a large selection of rocks are available, including Texada limestone, blue quarry rock, river rock, and even large feature boulders.

More than gardens

There's a lot more than gardens going on at T&R. Last year, they started offering pre-cast concrete from Cumberland-based Hyland Pre-Cast for products such as catch-basins, parking curbs, or roadside barriers. T&R also now offers Flex MSE, a system that structurally serves like a traditional concrete block retaining wall, but looks more like a vertical garden. T&R has the bags, products to fill them, staff, equipment and services to build your wall.

Construction aggregate

The new additions to the services offered by T&R don't take away from the fact that the company's core is with sand, gravel and rock for construction and for industrial roads. The owners of T&R, as well as partner companies Shaun Gloslee Excavating, Coast Hydro Excavating, and Rural Septic Services, know that diversification is important, but so is satisfying the customers that have helped build the business to what it is today.

Equipment

Their fleet of equipment is designed to serve that core business, with dump trucks, a Hiab, rock crushers, excavators and a potable (drinking) water truck. But much of it serves dual purposes. The slinger truck, for instance, can be a huge timesaver for residential projects.

"The slinger truck accurately places product or materials as thin or thick as you would like. It throws 50 feet or more. We can place your product in inaccessible locations and over obstacles. It saves individuals hours of back breaking work," says Bonnie.



Original Salish Fish Compost

Salish Soils uses Powell River's Agri-marine certified organic trout and salmon sourced from the Shilhalh and Tla'amin territory to produce Salish Soil's signature compost which is our premium product, a blend of certified organic trout, salmon and forest waste. Cured over a three-month period and then double screened to perfection, Original Salish Soils Fish Compost meets all Organic Matter Recycling Regulations and is a supreme organic growing medium for top-dressing your beds. This product feeds your soil in the fall/winter/spring for a healthy and nutrient rich soil.

Salish Soil Potting Mix (Bagged)

Potting Mix is made from a blend of Original Fish Compost, washed filled sand, crusher dust, peat moss, blood meal, bone meal and lime. The Potting Mix covers all your tender seedling needs, and gives young plants a healthy start. Light in texture, this is product is ideal for planter and container growing. Available in 20 litre bags.

Salish Soil Garden Mix

Salish Soils Garden Mix is made up of 70% Original Fish Compost and 30% wash filled sand. Perfect for all NEW flower, veggie, and landscaping beds, this mix is the foundation to successful growing as the sand and peat act to retain/drain moisture. Adding Salish compost in the spring/fall completes the process. It can be used for all types of plants including vegetables and flowers.

Raincoast Blend

Salish Soils blend of composted food and garden residuals. This product is best for building up landscaping areas that do not require a high end soil mix. The Raincoast Mix can also be used for hardscaping areas and hardy planting.

Salish Soil Landscape Mix

Landscape Mix is made up of 50% Original Fish Compost and 50% wash filled sand. This ratio is ideal for turf and lawn seeding, as well as trees and shrubs.

Residential

Salish Soils Compost & Mixes
Garden Blend Soil
Turf Blend Soil
Mushroom Manure
Fish Compost
Aged Mulch
Cedar & Fir Mulch
Decorative Rock

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By the truckload
or by the pail!

We deliver or you pick up



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Home + Garden Show!
(or 7 days a week
on Padgett Road)

Commercial

Slinger truck
Dump trucks
Excavators
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Sand & gravel
Navijack
Rip Rap & Crush
Pre-Cast Concrete