



# **TOWN OF CHATHAM BOARD OF HEALTH**

## **ANIMAL REGULATION**

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## SECTION 1 AUTHORITY

In order to better protect the public health and to provide for the care and well-being of the Town's animals, the Board of Health of the Town of Chatham, in accordance with and under the authority granted by Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 111, § 31 has promulgated and voted to adopt the following regulation for animals. This regulation supersedes the current Town of Chatham Animal Regulations.

## SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS

2.1	<b>Animal</b>	Any of a kingdom of living beings typically differing from plants in their capacity for spontaneous movement and rapid motor response to stimulation. For the purposes of this regulation, Homo sapiens are excluded.
2.2	<b>Animal Shelter</b>	Any building or structure where a farm animal is sheltered or maintained, or a portion of a building used for this purpose.
2.3	<b>Barn</b>	Any animal shelter used specifically to shelter or maintain bovine, caprine, or ovine animals; alpacas, or llamas.
2.4	<b>Coop</b>	Any animal shelter used specifically to shelter or maintain poultry.
2.5	<b>Enclosure</b>	Including, but not limited to, any fencing, corral, paddock area, pen, exercise area, or the like used to contain farm animals.
2.6	<b>Farm Animal</b>	Including, but not limited to, any bovine, caprine, equine (horse, foal, pony, mule, burro), ovine, or porcine animal; alpacas, llamas, poultry, or rabbits of any quantity, sex and/or age.
2.7	<b>Feeding and Baiting</b>	The placing, exposing, depositing, distributing, or scattering, directly or indirectly, of shelled, shucked, or unshucked corn, wheat or other grain, bread, salt, or any other feed or nutritive substances, in any manner or form, so as to constitute for waterfowl a lure, attraction, or enticement to, on, or over any such areas where such feed items have been placed, exposed, deposited, distributed, or scattered.
2.8	<b>Horse</b>	For the purposes of this regulation, an equine animal height that is 14.2 hh (58") or greater.
2.9	<b>Piggery</b>	Any animal shelter used specifically to shelter or maintain porcine animals for food, sale, or for any other purpose.
2.10	<b>Pony</b>	For the purposes of this regulation, an equine animal height that is less than 14.2 hh (58").
2.11	<b>Poultry</b>	Including, but not limited to, domestic fowl such as chickens, ducks, geese, guinea hens, peacocks, pheasants, pigeons, or turkeys.
2.12	<b>Rabbitries</b>	A collection of at least four (4) domestic rabbits over the age of twelve (12) weeks on a single premises, whether maintained for breeding, sale, or any other purpose; also, the animal shelter used specifically to shelter or maintain such a collection.
2.13	<b>Stable</b>	Any animal shelter used specifically to shelter or maintain equine animals.
2.14	<b>Waterfowl</b>	For the purpose of this regulation any member of the family Anatidae (including, but not restricted to, ducks, geese and swans), Laridae ("gulls"), or Columbidae ("pigeons").
2.15	<b>Wetland</b>	As defined in the Chatham Wetland Protection By-Law.

### SECTION 3 GENERAL

- 3.1 **Animal Care:** All domestic animals kept in the Town of Chatham shall be provided with the appropriate food, water, and shelter in accordance with their characteristic needs and with generally recognized and accepted practices. All animals shall be subject to monitoring to protect against abuse. All domestic animals kept in the Town of Chatham shall be effectively controlled so as not to become a nuisance or a danger to their own or the public health. Allowing animals and/or animal waste to pollute any wetland or waterway is prohibited. No animal by-products, other than processed, shall be used to feed any animal in the Town of Chatham.
- 3.2 **Minimum Lot Size:** No animal shelter shall be located on any lot having less than forty thousand square feet (40,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of area, unless a variance is granted by the Board of Health. The Board of Health shall reserve the right to review the health conditions on any proposed or existing site where animals have been or are proposed to be kept.

### SECTION 4 SETBACKS - ANIMAL SHELTERS/ENCLOSURES

Abutters' side line and road setbacks shall comply with the dimensional requirements outlined in Appendix II of the Chatham Zoning By-Laws. In addition, all animal shelters and their enclosures shall set back from abutters according to the following table. A site plan of the property showing the proposed location of the animal shelter and turnouts/paddocks, to include setbacks, and grades, shall be submitted for review and approval.

#### MINIMUM DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS

	Barns	Coops	Piggery	Rabbitries	Stables	Enclosures	Covered Manure Pile	Composted Open Manure Pile
Abutter's Dwelling	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.	15 ft.	45 ft.	65 ft.
Abutter's Property Line	15 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.	25 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.	30 ft.	50 ft.
Private Domestic Water Supply Well	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.
Town Water Supply Well	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.	400 ft.
Wetland	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.

### SECTION 5 CONSTRUCTION

- 5.1 **Barns**
  - A. Barns shall be constructed according to the Massachusetts State Building Code.
  - B. All barns shall have, in a conspicuous location, a class 1 fire extinguisher (minimum- 5 lb. ABC or the equivalent) which is pressure tested annually or has a gauge.
  - C. All barns shall be kept structurally sound, free from decay and damage, and in a clean and sanitary condition, free from insect and rodent infestation.
  - D. All stalls and pens shall be constructed according to the guidelines of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- 5.2 **Coops:** All coops shall be kept structurally sound, free from decay and damage, and in a clean and sanitary condition, free from insect and rodent infestation.

### 5.3 Piggeries

- A. No more than one (1) pig per forty thousand square feet (40,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) shall be allowed in the Town of Chatham.
- B. In addition to the requirements set forth in Section 4 above, all buildings and pens, runs, or other such enclosures used to house or confine pigs shall be located in accordance with M.G.L. C. 111, 143.
- C. **Maintenance of Facilities**
  - 1. All piggeries shall be kept structurally sound, free from decay and damage, and in a clean and sanitary condition, free from insect and rodent infestation.
  - 2. Brood houses shall be cleaned daily.
  - 3. Refuse, including uneaten food, and manure shall be immediately removed from the premises or shall be kept that such material will not create odors noticeable off the premises, will not permit fly breeding, and will not be accessible to the pigs.
- D. **Ventilation:** All buildings used to house pigs shall be properly ventilated.
- E. **Garbage and the Storage of Garbage**
  - 1. All garbage, regardless of previous processing, shall be thoroughly heated to at least 212°F (100°C) for at least thirty (30) minutes before being fed to the pigs unless treated in some other manner which shall be approved, in writing, by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, as being equally effective
  - 2. A bin or other approved receptacle for receiving garbage shall be provided and shall be tightly covered. Bins, cans, wagons, trucks, and other receptacles for the storage of garbage shall be thoroughly cleaned after the removal of the garbage.

### 5.4 Rabbitries

- A. All rabbitries shall be kept structurally sound, free from decay and damage, and in a clean and sanitary condition, free from insect and rodent infestation.
- B. **Housing**
  - 1. Freestanding hutches shall be of sturdy construction to prevent predators from gaining entry.
  - 2. A section of any freestanding hutch shall be completely enclosed and weatherproofed with an exit to the pen large enough for the rabbit to enter at will.
  - 3. Freestanding hutches shall be a minimum of three (3) feet above the ground.
  - 4. Hutches housing more than one (1) rabbit over the age of eight (8) weeks shall be a minimum of four feet square (4' x 4'), with a reasonable amount of room added for each additional animal.
  - 5. Poultry netting shall not be used for either the flooring or siding of hutches. One half (½) inch hardware cloth is recommended.
  - 6. Ground level housing shall follow the same space requirements as freestanding hutches.

### 5.5 Stables

- A. Every equine animal shall have stable facilities and no equine animal shall be allowed to remain out of doors at all times without having access to proper shelter.
- B. Stables shall be constructed according to the Massachusetts State Building Code.
- C. All stables shall have, in a conspicuous location, a class 1 fire extinguisher (minimum- 5 lb. ABC or the equivalent) which is pressure tested annually or has a gauge.
- D. All stables shall be kept structurally sound, free from decay and damage, and in a clean and sanitary condition, free from insect and rodent infestation.
- E. **Head-clearance**
  - 1. All horses shall have a minimum of eight (8) feet head-clearance.
  - 2. All ponies shall have a minimum of six (6) feet head-clearance.
  - 3. All other equine animals shall have a minimum head-clearance commensurate with their size.
- F. **Stall Size**
  - 1. All stalls for ponies shall be a minimum of eight feet square (8' x 8').

2. All stalls for horses sixteen (16) hands in height or less shall be a minimum of ten feet square (10' x 10').
  3. All stalls for horses exceeding sixteen (16) hands in height, i.e., Warmbloods, draft horses, etc., shall be a minimum of twelve feet square (12' x 12').
  4. All stalls for foaling or for a broodmare with a foal at her side shall be a minimum of fourteen feet square (14' x 14').
  5. All stalls for all other equine animals shall be commensurate with their size.
- G. **Light & Ventilation:** Each stall shall have at least one window that can be opened for draft-free ventilation. It shall be covered with heavy-gauge wire or bars to prevent breakage and injury to the animal.
- H. **Floors**
1. **Ideal:** Six (6) to ten (10) inches of tamped clay over two (2) or more feet of good drainage material, i.e., sand or gravel.
  2. **Excellent:** Stall rubber matting over a proper base material.
  3. **Good:** Two (2) to three (3) inch thick wooden planks space laid over good drainage material.
  4. **Unacceptable:** bare wooden or concrete floors.
- I. **Bedding:** Each stall shall have three (3) to six (6) inches of sawdust, shavings, or dust-free straw as a bedding material.

5.6 **Open Sheds:** Each shed shall be a three sided, roofed structure built according to State guidelines. The shed shall face south whenever possible.

## SECTION 6 FEED ROOM

The owner shall provide for vermin-proof and insect-free storage for grain and shall provide refrigeration facilities where needed.

## SECTION 7 ENCLOSURES

### 7.1 General

- A. Animals shall always have access to an adequate drinking water supply.
- B. Animal enclosures shall be of sufficient strength to restrain all animals.
- C. Barbed wire shall not be used for any animal enclosure.

### 7.2 Bovine, Caprine, Equine, and Ovine Animals

- A. All paddocks/pens shall be graded and drained to prevent standing pools of water.
- B. Turnouts shall be provided for each animal, with a minimum of Twenty-five Hundred square feet (2500 ft<sup>2</sup>) for a single animal and Twelve Hundred Fifty square feet (1250 ft<sup>2</sup>) for each additional animal held in the same enclosure.

### 7.3 Porcine Animals

- A. All pens, runs, or other such enclosures used to confine pigs shall be located in accordance with M.G.L. C. 111, § 143.
- B. Pens shall be cleaned at least twice a week.
- C. **Feed Troughs**
  1. For indoor pens, watertight troughs shall be provided for feeding purposes and shall be kept in good repair. Such material shall be thoroughly cleaned each day.
  2. For outdoor pens, troughs shall be properly maintained. No feed or manure shall be allowed to accumulate on the ground

7.4 **Poultry**

- A. Pens shall be a minimum of twelve feet square (12' x 12') for six (6) fowl; larger pens shall be provided for larger populations of birds.
- B. Pens shall be covered to prevent predators from entering.
- C. The flooring and fencing of the pens shall be constructed in such a way as to prevent predators from digging to gain entry.

7.5 **Rabbits**

- A. Pens for ground level housing shall be a minimum of three feet square (3' x 3'), excluding any shelter area.
- B. Flooring and fencing shall be constructed in such a manner to preclude predators from digging to gain entry.

**SECTION 8 DRAINAGE AND WASTE DISPOSAL**

- 8.1 All drainage, animal wastes, and used bedding shall be disposed of in a sanitary manner.
- 8.2 All animal waste shall be either composted (see Appendix A) on the premises or stored temporarily, not to exceed two (2) weeks, above-ground. Storing above-ground requires covering the waste with a watertight cover.
  - A. No manure or used bedding shall be permitted to remain outside the barn unless collected in compost piles, in accordance with Appendix A.
  - B. If uneaten feed, manure, and refuse are collected in compost piles, they shall be covered with earth, loam, or other suitable material in sufficient amounts to eliminate any odor or nuisance.
- 8.3 All animal wastes shall be removed from barns and pens at least once daily and shall be disposed of as above.
- 8.4 All animal waste stored or composted shall be located to prevent runoff from entering any wetland or waterway, including drainage ditches.

**SECTION 9 PERMITS AND REGISTRATION**

- 9.1 **Permit:** No person shall keep or maintain in the Town of Chatham, farm animals or poultry without prior approval from the Board of Health or without a permit. For new construction, the applicant is responsible for obtaining the necessary zoning by-law approvals prior to seeking Board of Health approval. The permit shall be set by the Board of Health and shall be renewed by January 1, annually.
- 9.2 **Registration:** The number of animals on the property shall not exceed the total indicated on the permit. Animals up to the age of three (3) months are exempt. Proof shall be presented that all equines have current vaccinations against Rabies, Tetanus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. A negative Coggins Test Report shall be required for horses entering a boarding stable. All caprine, bovine, equine, and ovines must comply with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Food and Agriculture, Division of Animal Health Services health testing requirements. All commercial stables are subject to the rules and regulations of Chapter 128, Section 2B of the Massachusetts General Laws.
- 9.3 **Exemptions:** Ten (10) or fewer domestic fowl are exempt from the permit process. Roosters shall not be exempt.

**SECTION 10 INSPECTIONS**

Inspections will be conducted annually or as necessary and shall be during reasonable hours, by the Board of Health, Health Agent, or Animal Inspector. Failure to correct cited deficiencies may lead to the issuance of fines, the revocation of the Board of Health Permit, or both.

## **SECTION 11 BAN ON THE FEEDING OF WATERFOWL**

### **11.1 Purpose**

Waterfowl can be perceived as “nuisances” when they are deliberately attracted by and then become habituated to humans and begin to associate food with proximity to suburban areas. Intentionally feeding waterfowl is often the source of human-waterfowl problems. The resulting conflicts pose hazards to both humans and waterfowl. The purpose of this section is the protection of public health and water quality, for shell fishing, public swimming, and recreational uses, from pollution caused by unnatural harborage of waterfowl, due to feeding and baiting by the public.

### **11.2 Feeding Prohibited**

No person, except the Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife or his agent or designee, as authorized pursuant to Chapter 131 of the General Laws shall feed or bait, any waterfowl of the family Anatidae (including, but not restricted to, ducks, geese and swans), Laridae (“gulls”), or Columbidae (“pigeons”) at any place within the Town of Chatham.

### **11.3 Exceptions**

Nothing in this regulation shall be construed to limit the feeding of domesticated waterfowl, as defined by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, by a farmer as defined in Section 1A of Chapter 128 on property owned or leased by him, or the feeding of any waterfowl or other birds by propagators licensed under Section 23 of Chapter 131 of the General Laws when such waterfowl or other birds are confined in such manner as may be required pursuant to said Section 23 and any rules and regulations issued under authority thereof.

The feeding by any person or his agents, or licensees of waterfowl lawfully kept as a pet by that person.

### **11.4 Emergency feeding**

Notwithstanding any of the above, the Director of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife may authorize the emergency feeding of any waterfowl and other birds when in his opinion, such action is necessary in order to alleviate undue losses and suffering of such birds due to unusual weather conditions and other circumstances. The Director may authorize such action by such means as he deems necessary and expedient, but such means shall include the immediate notification of the Selectmen thereof by first-class mail.

## **SECTION 12 VARIANCES**

The Board of Health may vary the application of these regulations if it finds that these regulations would cause undue hardship to the applicant and that the granting of a variance would not be detrimental to the public health or to animals. Variances shall be in writing and shall be subjected to such conditions as the Board of Health may judge necessary.

## **SECTION 13 SEVERABILITY**

Whenever possible, these regulations shall be deemed to be supplementary to, and not contradictory with, state and federal regulations. In the event any of those regulations shall be held invalid, any such regulation or regulations shall be deemed to be severed from the others and struck from these rules, but the remaining regulations shall continue in full force and in effect.

## SECTION 14 PENALTIES

### Non-Criminal Disposition

To provide for the more effective enforcement of the Animal Regulation, where judged appropriate, the use of non-criminal dispositions, will be implemented for enforcement. This action is authorized by M.G.L. C. 40, § 21 D, and pursuant to the Town of Chatham Bylaw to enforce Chapter 140, Section 173A, as amended in Chapter 627 of the Acts of 1973, restraining dogs from running at large, in said Town of Chatham. Each day's failure to comply with an order shall constitute a separate violation. The specific penalty that is to apply for violation of each such section shall be as listed below. The municipal officers or employees whose titles are listed below shall be deemed to be the enforcing officers. All violations initially shall be issued by a warning.

Enforcing persons	Animal Control Officer/Dog Officer, Board of Health and its Agents, Police Officers
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<b><u>PROVISION</u></b>	<b><u>FINE</u></b>
Setbacks	\$50.00
Construction	\$50.00
Feed Room	\$25.00
Enclosures	\$25.00
Drainage and Waste Disposal	\$50.00
Permits and Registration	\$25.00
Loose Farm Animals	\$25.00
Feeding Waterfowl	\$25.00

ADOPTED: December 1, 1992  
 REVISED: October 11, 2001  
 REVISED: effective August 30, 2007

Signed:

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 Edward Sheehan, Chairman

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 Richard Roy, Vice Chairman

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 Ronald Broman, Member

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 Mary Ann Gray, Member

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 Justin Rivers, D.D.S., Member

## Appendix A

# BASIC COMPOSTING

## Where to compost

Choose a site close to the source of manure with easy access. However, other factors in selecting the optimum site include:

- **Soil permeability and drainage** — locate the compost pile on compacted soil or an impervious surface to lessen the seepage of nutrients and salts into the ground. Composting on top of a concrete pad may help in less desirable locations. Some people like to use a concrete pad to keep the area neater. The soil surrounding the pile should provide moderate drainage and should not be compacted from high traffic or pool up during wet weather. A slight slope of 2-4% will help drain water away from the compost area.
- **Topography** — Avoid locations near steep slopes or on highly erodible soils. Keep the composting site away from natural drainage areas and wells. The goal is to keep clean water clean and prevent contaminated water from the compost area from entering waterways. Runoff from a compost area may be high in nutrients and adversely affect aquatic life. If you are limited in site selection and a less desirable location is your only option, you may have to consider constructing diversions for capturing runoff from and/or diverting drainage around the compost area.
- **Regulations and advice** — The Health Department, The Massachusetts USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and Master Gardeners can help evaluate and help with design and trouble shooting of your compost system.
- **Future needs** — lastly, consider any long-range plans. Do you intend to expand your operation with more horses, buildings or fencing? You may need a larger composting area to accommodate any planned expansions. Health Department must be consulted before any expansion of your facility.

## How to compost

- **Ingredients** — the basic "ingredients" for composting are carbon materials, nitrogen materials, water, and air. As with any recipe, these four ingredients require the proper quantities, mixing, heat and time to produce compost. Horse manure alone provides the desired ratio of carbon material to nitrogen material, 30:1. The addition of bedding like straw, wood shavings or newspaper increases the carbon content, which will have to be balanced with additional material high in nitrogen, like food scraps, grass clippings, or

urea. A practical method for calculating the amount needed is described in “Compost Production and Utilization.” (See Resources.)

- **Methods** — you can compost in a number of different ways. For a small-scale operation, you would most likely compost in a pile or in concrete or wooden bins.

Composting in a **bin system** is neater, it keeps the materials enclosed and separated and requires less room. A three bin system works well for managing the waste for four or fewer horses. Construct bins next to one another. One bin is active, where freshly collected waste is deposited. The next bin contains the "composting" pile, and the third bin contains the finished product, ready to use.

There are many designs available for bin construction but keep in mind that a bin or a pile needs to be at least 3 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and 3 feet long. Maintaining a proper temperature will be difficult for piles smaller than this. Another system is a passively aerated pile. Before you build your pile, line up several four inch PVC pipes (length and number depends on the size of the pile) on the ground. Drill one-inch holes throughout the pipe to allow air to flow freely. The pipes should extend beyond the perimeter of the pile. Build the pile on top of the pipes. You can also place pipes in the middle of larger piles to increase airflow. This method may still require occasional turning. Forced aeration static piles are even more elaborate. A thermostat triggers a blower to force piped air through a pile or windrow. The compost does not have to be turned.

Composting larger amounts of waste works better in long narrow piles called **windrows**. Because of the high density of horse manure, the windrows should not be higher than 3-5 feet and wider than 12 feet. This size will allow for passive air movement through the windrow. The windrow can be as long as you wish. The windrows can be placed side-by-side, but unless a forced aeration system is planned remember to allow room for turning. Turn windrows with a windrow turner, which is an expensive piece of machinery, or a front-end loader tractor.

Whether you use piles, a bin system or windrows, a roof, lid, or tarp must cover the compost. Covering compost sheds rainwater preventing the compost from becoming too wet. Shedding water away from the compost will also lessen the amount of leaching or washing of nutrients into waterways. Covering the pile also helps retain heat and limits fly breeding opportunities. It may be impractical to cover large windrows with a roof, in this case, cover them in the rainy season with a tarp.

## Pile Management

- **Additional Materials** — if you are mixing other organic materials like food scraps in with the manure, make sure they are of a uniform size, about 1/2-inch in diameter. This will help produce a homogeneous product and keep the decomposition rates of the materials the same. Mix additional materials into the pile as it is built. This will help deter pests and flies and help keep the odor down. Avoid adding meat and dairy products to your pile, which may attract scavengers. Also avoid adding cat or dog feces to the pile, they can contain harmful parasites.

- **Water** — to monitor the pile, you will need to keep track of the moisture content and the temperature. An ideal compost mixture contains 50-60% moisture. You can test for moisture by squeezing a handful of compost. It is wet enough if a small amount of water comes out between your fingers. It will feel like a wrung out sponge. The moisture content of fresh horse manure is nearly ideal. Water provides an environment for microbes to live in. Too wet or too dry a pile will cause the essential microbes to die. So pay attention to the moisture content of your compost pile and, if necessary, add water when adding material or turning the compost. Keep the pile covered to help maintain proper moisture content.
- **Turning** — the more often you turn the pile, the faster it will compost. Turning the pile mixes the ingredients, provides oxygen to the microbes, rebuilds the porosity of the pile, and exposes all of the pile equally to the air in the outer layer and to the high temperature in the center of the pile. Turning the pile also eliminates anaerobic organisms that cause foul odors. For faster composting, turn the pile 3 times per week. Small compost piles can be turned in a few minutes with a pitchfork. Larger piles require more labor, a tractor or a windrow turner.
- **Temperature** — decomposition of organic matter by microbes produces heat. The optimal temperature range of your pile should be between 122 and 145 degrees Fahrenheit. These high temperatures will kill pathogens and weed seeds. Don't allow temperatures to rise much higher or the microbes will also die. When the pile reaches 140 degrees, start turning the pile more and remember to keep it moist. The moisture will help keep the temperature from getting too hot. Spontaneous combustion can occur but generally in conditions when the pile is over 12 feet high and has only 25-45% moisture content. Long probed compost thermometers can be purchased in many gardening catalogues and at some gardening stores. Monitor the temperature, in the middle of the pile, every day if possible, and keep records.
- **Time** — the compost will be ready to use in 3 to 8 weeks depending on how it is managed and the climate; it will take longer in the cooler months. High-grade compost, used in potting mixes, needs more time and more management. Lower grade compost, used on pastures or around the yard, requires less time and management.

### **When is compost ready?**

You will know the compost is ready when the temperature in the middle of the pile subsides to the ambient surrounding temperature and does not reheat with turning. The moisture content will be near 50%. Mature compost is evenly textured and has an earthy smell. Or, you can buy kits to test for readiness. The tests measure the amount of carbon dioxide and the amount of decomposition that is still possible. Before you use the compost, check the pH. The pH value desired for growing most food crops are around 6.8-7.0 and compost is generally neutral (7.0) to slightly alkaline (7.1-8.0). Check with the Cape Cod Cooperative Extension or Master Gardeners on plants that may require a more acidic (lower pH) or alkaline (higher pH) soil. Add lime if the compost is too acidic. Add aluminum sulfate if it is too alkaline.

### **What is compost used for?**

Compost can be applied as a soil amendment and fertilizer. You can incorporate it into gardens or spread it on your pastures. It can be used as a mulch and top dressing around trees and shrubs or in vineyards and orchards. Compost is not very effective as an immediate nitrogen fertilizer, although it will contribute to soil fertility in the long term. Compost should be spread just before or during the growing season when there is little likelihood of immediate rain washing the compost into waterways. If the compost is well aged and cured (allowed to sit for an additional 1-3 months), it can be used as a potting mix or seed starter. Less mature compost will prevent roots from developing because it is still decomposing and using up oxygen in the process.

Remember that compost can be an asset to your property. It may not solve all of your waste disposal problems but it will help reduce the amount of waste and provide you with a valuable product to use or give away.