

## **How Does Your Garden Grow - With Sewage Sludge? From United Sludge Free Alliance**

Is your bagged garden fertilizer made from sewage sludge waste? What about that “compost give-away” at the municipal center? If the bag says compost and nothing else, it is a "crap shoot" at best. There are no federal or state regulations that require listing sewage sludge/biosolids as an ingredient in the material. Sludge can legally be “blended” into other bagged fertilizers and there is no labeling requirement. Sometimes the product is called “biosolids,” sometimes they’re not. Remember, the term “biosolids” is the user friendly term for sewage sludge.

Sewage sludge/biosolids looks innocent enough, just like any manure or fertilizer, but it is the solid waste of everything that goes down the drain of every home, business, industry and hospital. With testing requirements for only 10 elements and two “indicator bacteria” in sewage sludge/biosolids products, all the contaminants, pharmaceuticals, and toxic chemicals that go down the drain go right into your “fertilizer.” Remember, terms like “organic” and “natural” only apply to some food products, not compost or fertilizer (Hint: arsenic and lead are “natural” and you don’t want them in your fertilizer either!)

Toxins and heavy metals don’t disappear because they are exposed to sun or rain, they build in your soil or travel by wind and water run-off into your home and community. The heavy metals and toxic waste also are absorbed in your vegetables, plants and livestock animals. When you consume foods grown in sludge, you consume whatever the plant takes up from the soil. When you consume animals that are fed crops grown in sewage sludge, elements like heavy metals collect in the animal’s meat, milk and fat.

What to do? Ask questions and research! Call the company phone number on the bag before you purchase. Tell your nursery you want labeling which product are “sludge-free”. Insist on “sludge-free fertilizers” for your schools, parks and playgrounds. Get involved: check the list of “sludge-based fertilizers” at our website: [www.usludgefree.org](http://www.usludgefree.org)

## **Bagged Fertilizer Products Containing Sewage Sludge & “Biosolids”**

Use your purchase power when you choose your fertilizer products. Our ongoing list of sludge/biosolids based bagged and bulk ‘fertilizer’ and ‘compost’ will guide you. Terms - including the terms ‘organic’ and ‘natural’ - have no legitimate claim on the safety or health of the product. Phone the fertilizer company you are considering buying from and ask them directly: “Do you use biosolids or sewage sludge in your product?”

If the answer is “Yes”, tell them you will not be purchasing their product. If they are not on this list, please contact us so we can add them to this ongoing list.

A&M Composting plant, owned by J. P. Mascaro & Sons (Lancaster, PA): Agresoil (MA): Agresource (Ipswich, MA): All-Gro (Synagro): Amend (Kellogg Garden Products, Los Angeles, CA): American Green Corp (Pottsville, PA): Bay State Fertilizer (Boston, MA): Blessing Greenhouses and Compost Facility (DE): Chesapeake Sunshine: CompostT (Pennsylvania): ComPro (Washington, D.C.): Dillo Dirt (Texas): Earth Blends Inc. ( WeCare subsidiaries): Earth Life (Maine): EarthMate: EKO Compost (Missoula, MT): Hawk Ridge (Maine): Glacier Gold (Olney, MT): Granulite (Synagro): GroCo (King County, WA) : Gromulch (Kellogg Garden Products, Los Angeles, CA): Growers' Blend (Earthwise Organics, Synagro subsidiary): Hou-Actinite (Houston, TX): Landscapers' Advantage (Camden, NJ): MetroGro (Madison, WI): Milorganite (Milwaukee, WI): Mine Mix (Philadelphia, PA): Natural Soils Products (Good Springs, PA): New England Fertilizer Company (North Quincy, Massachusetts): New England Organics: New York Organic Fertilizer Company (NYC pellets, a Synagro company): Nitrohumus (Kellogg Garden Products, Los Angeles, CA): Nutri-Green Compost (Virginia): N-Viro BioBlend: N-Viro Soil: Oceangro (NJ): ORGRO High Organic Compost (Baltimore, MD): Resource Management Inc. (Ashland, NH): SilviGrow (Seattle, WA): Soil Preparation Inc./ F.S.Transportation LLC (Plymouth, Maine): SoundGro (Pierce County, WA) : TAGRO (CA & WA) : Topper (Kellogg Garden Products, Los Angeles, CA): Vermitech USA: We Care Compost (NY & MA)

Information Compiled by: United Sludge Free Alliance; [usludgefree.org](http://usludgefree.org)