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Session 2020-2021



Session 2021-2022

Report on Vermicompost

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Date-13th March 2022

Venue – Mittal Institute Of Education

VERMICOMPOSTING IS A PROFITABLE BUSINESS

As many of them in recent times are fond of organic vegetables, fruits, and other products as they are not produced by using harmful chemical substances i.e., organic farms where they use these naturally produced composts and manures from the waste of animal and plant

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Vermicompost is known to be the world's best fertilizer. Vermicomposting is a method of preparing enriched compost with the use of earthworms. It is one of the easiest methods to recycle agricultural wastes and to produce quality compost. Earthworms consume biomass and excrete it in digested form called worm casts. Worm casts are popularly called as Black gold. The casts are rich in nutrients, growth promoting substances, beneficial soil micro flora and having properties of inhibiting pathogenic microbes. Vermicompost is stable, fine granular organic manure, which enriches soil quality by improving its physicochemical and biological properties. It is highly useful in raising seedlings and for crop production. Vermicompost is becoming popular as a major component of organic farming system. Using Vermicompost can fulfill the requirements for organically grown products.

Production

Technology Vermicomposting materials:

Decomposable organic wastes such as animal excreta, kitchen waste, farm residues and forest litter are commonly used as composting materials. In general, animal dung mostly cow dung and dried chopped crop residues are the key raw materials. Mixture of leguminous and non-leguminous crop residues enriches the quality of vermicompost. Red earthworm (*Eisenia foetida*) is preferred species of earthworms because of its high multiplication rate and thereby converts the organic matter into vermicompost within 45-50 days. Since it is a surface feeder it converts organic materials into vermicompost from top.

Process of vermicompost preparation:

Vermicomposting is done by either bed or pit method. In bed method composting is done on the pucca / kachcha floor by making bed of organic mixture while in pit method it is done in the cemented pits.

- Vermicomposting unit should be in a cool, moist and shady site
- Cow dung and chopped dried leafy materials are mixed in the proportion of 3: 1 and are kept for partial decomposition for 15 – 20 days.
- A layer of 15-20cm of chopped dried leaves/grasses should be kept as bedding material at the bottom of the bed.
- Beds of partially decomposed material of size 6x2x2 feet should be made.
- Each bed should contain 1.5-2.0q of raw material and the number of beds can be increased as per raw material availability and requirement.
- Red earthworm (1500-2000) should be released on the upper layer of bed.
- Water should be sprinkled with can immediately after the release of worms
- Beds should be kept moist by sprinkling of water (daily) and by covering with gunny bags/polythene.
- Bed should be turned once after 30 days for maintaining aeration and for proper decomposition.
- Compost gets ready in 45-50 days. The finished product is 3/4th of the raw materials used.

Harvesting:

When raw material is completely decomposed it appears black and granular. Watering should be stopped as compost gets ready. The compost should be kept over a heap of partially decomposed cow dung so that earthworms could migrate to cow dung from compost. After two days compost can be separated and sieved for use.

MARKET POTENTIAL

Vermicompost has been emerging as an important source in supplementing and substituting chemical fertilizers in agriculture. Vermicompost, also known as ‘farmers’ friend’ is used for general crops and plantation crops. It is a valuable input for sustainable agriculture and wasteland development. It is a growth promoter and helpful in providing hormones required for plant growth. There is a lot of demand for vermicompost among farmers as its use increases quality of agricultural products and its price is also cheaper. It is also used widely in pot culture and in home gardens. In addition, many government departments including agriculture, forest and horticulture buy it in bulk. Its demand has decreased over the years. Government agencies and NGOs are popularizing organic agriculture using vermicompost by organizing awareness campaigns and film show in rural and urban areas.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Productivity of farmers will be increased by supplying affordable, good quality inputs in an efficient manner.

2. The consumption patterns of agriculture inputs have direct relevance to output pattern of crops. Hence farmers will be educated on balanced and efficient use of inputs.
3. Free advisory services ranging from sowing to harvesting of crops as well as farm credit & crop loan will be provided.
4. Tools of information technology will be used to provide latest information to farmers.
5. Farmers will be promoted to utilize Government information technology networks like Kisan Call Centres.
6. Interface meets between Government agencies, Agribusiness campiness & farmers will be arranged.
7. Farmer meetings will be organized on regular basis aiming at training them about the right use of agrochemicals in terms of quantity to be used.
8. Trained human resources in agriculture and allied sciences is going to take on agricultural extension system due to limitations of the present government agricultural extension staff as consulting services.
 - **Pit Method:** In this method, the organic matter is collected in cemented pits. In ower collage we have used 3/1 upper pit

Process of Vermicomposting

The entire process of vermicomposting is mentioned below:

Aim

To prepare vermicompost using earthworms (*Eisenia foetida*)and other biodegradable wastes.

Principle

This process is mainly required to add nutrients to the soil. Compost is a natural fertilizer that allows an easy flow of water to the growing plants. The earthworms are mainly used in this process as they eat the organic matter and produce castings through their digestive systems.

The nutrients profile of vermicomposts is:

- 1.6 per cent of Nitrogen.
- 0.7 per cent of Phosphorus.
- 0.8 per cent of Potassium.
- 0.5 per cent of Calcium.
- 0.2 per cent of Magnesium.
- 175 ppm of Iron.
- 96.5 ppm of Manganese.
- 24.5 ppm of Zinc.

Materials Required

- Water.
- Cow dung.
- Thatch Roof.
- Soil or Sand.
- Gunny bags.
- Earthworms.
- Weed biomass
- A large bin (plastic or cemented tank).
- Dry straw and leaves collected from paddy fields.
- Biodegradable wastes collected from fields and kitchen.

Procedure

1. To prepare compost, or a concrete tank is used. The size of the tank depends 3*1 upper pit method .
2. Collect the biomass and place it under the sun for about 8-12 days. Now chop it to the required size using the cutter.
3. Prepare a cow dung slurry and sprinkle it on the heap for quick decomposition.
4. Add a layer (2 – 3 inch) of soil or sand at the bottom of the tank.
5. Now prepare fine bedding by adding partially decomposed cow dung, dried leaves and other biodegradable wastes collected from fields and kitchen. Distribute them evenly on the sand layer.
6. Continue adding both the chopped bio-waste and partially decomposed cow dung layer-wise into the tank up to a depth of 0.5-1.0 ft.
7. After adding all the bio-wastes, release the earthworm species over the mixture and cover the compost mixture with dry straw or gunny bags.
8. Sprinkle water on a regular basis to maintain the moisture content of the compost.
9. Cover the tank with a thatch roof to prevent the entry of ants, lizards, mouse, snakes, etc. and protect the compost from rainwater and direct sunshine.
Have a frequent check to avoid the compost from overheating. Maintain proper moisture and temperature.

Result

After the 24th day, around 4000 to 5000 new worms are introduced and the entire raw material is turned into the vermicompost .

Advantages Of Vermicomposting

The major benefits of vermicomposting are:

1. Develops roots of the plants.
2. Improves the physical structure of the soil.
3. Vermicomposting increases the fertility and water-resistance of the soil.
4. Helps in germination, plant growth, and crop yield.
5. Nurtures soil with plant growth hormones such as auxins, gibberellic acid, etc

