

Glossary

Compost

The material resulting from composting. Compost, also called humus, is a soil conditioner and in some instances is used as a fertilizer.

Composting

Biological decomposition of solid organic materials by bacteria, fungi, and other organisms into a soil-like product.

Energy recovery

The process of extracting useful energy from waste, typically from the heat produced by incineration or via methane gas from landfills.

Humus

The end product of composting, also called compost.

Leachate

Liquid (which may be partly produced by decomposition of organic matter) that has seeped through a landfill or a compost pile and has accumulated bacteria and other possibly harmful dissolved or suspended materials. If uncontrolled, leachate can contaminate both groundwater and surface water.

Leachate pond

A pond or tank constructed at a landfill to receive the leachate from the area. Usually the pond is designed to provide some treatment of the leachate, by allowing settlement of solids or by aeration to promote biological processes.

Pathogen

An organism capable of causing disease.

Post-consumer materials

Materials that a consumer has finished using, which the consumer may sell, give away, or discard as wastes.