



## Introducing... composting toilets

### Why use composting toilets?

Disposing of our sewage is a major concern in Australia, especially in cities. Flush toilet systems use large amounts of water and create the need for costly and environmentally damaging infrastructure to treat and dispose of the waste. We need to start taking responsibility for all our own waste right at home, and nowadays there are perfectly healthy, odorless and inexpensive alternatives.

Properly composted sewage is a valuable fertilizer and has been used to build and maintain agricultural soils in eastern countries for centuries. Composting toilets, with little or even no water, use the natural processes of decomposition to break down our own waste to a safe and usable material.

### How do they work?

Composting toilets are essentially like any garden composting system, and if they are well managed there is no smell. The high temperatures that can be reached reduce the time it takes to break down the organic matter into compost.

There are many commercial systems on the market to choose from. Some, known as wet composting toilets, eg *Aqua Claris*, use water and then recycle the water back through the toilets and washing machines. These systems use earthworms and can take your kitchen scraps and convert them too. Other systems, known as dry composting toilets, leave the waste to decompose in bins beneath the toilet until it matures, when it can be incorporated into soil around fruit trees and ornamental plants. Commercially available systems that operate this way include *Nature Loo*, *Clivus Multrum*, *Rota Loo*, and *Enviro Loo*. Some of these systems use some chemicals to help speed up decomposition, but all of them return the waste to the soil. *Clivus Multrum* dry composting toilets are now often installed at NSW highway rest areas.

### Ask your Council first!

It is important to consult your local Council about its requirements before choosing a composting toilet. The increasing number of applications to install composting toilets in residential homes has resulted in various Sydney councils, such as Manly, South Sydney, Marrickville, having experience granting approval subject to various conditions.

NSW Health Department has a list of approved composting toilet systems that can be viewed at their website: go to [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au) and search for Composting Toilets.



*Nature Loo:  
a split level system with ceramic pedestal.*



*Nature Loo:  
a stand-alone single unit for low-set homes.*