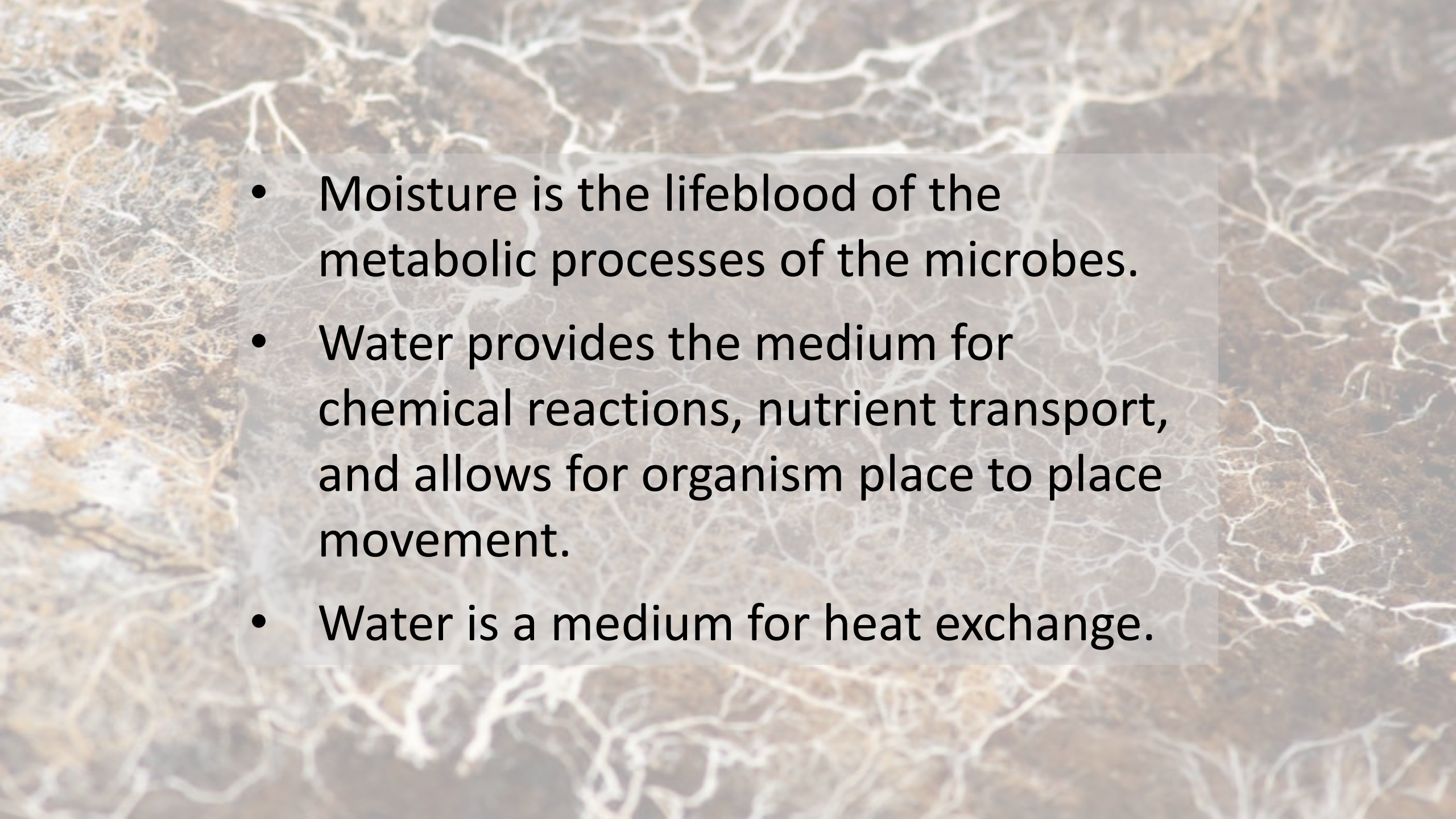


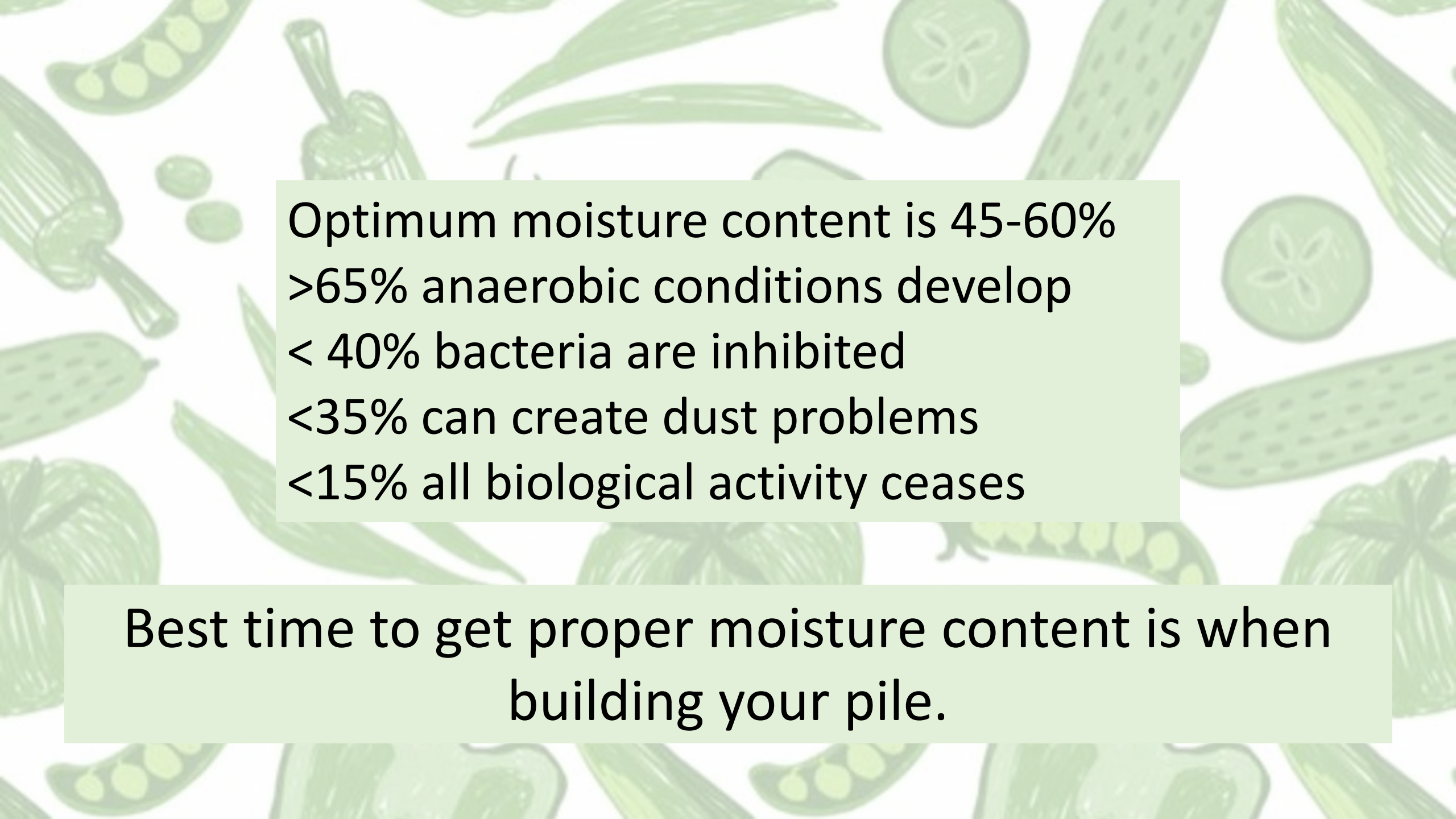
Module 06.04: Composting Parameters - Moisture

LSU AgCenter Home Composting Certificate Course

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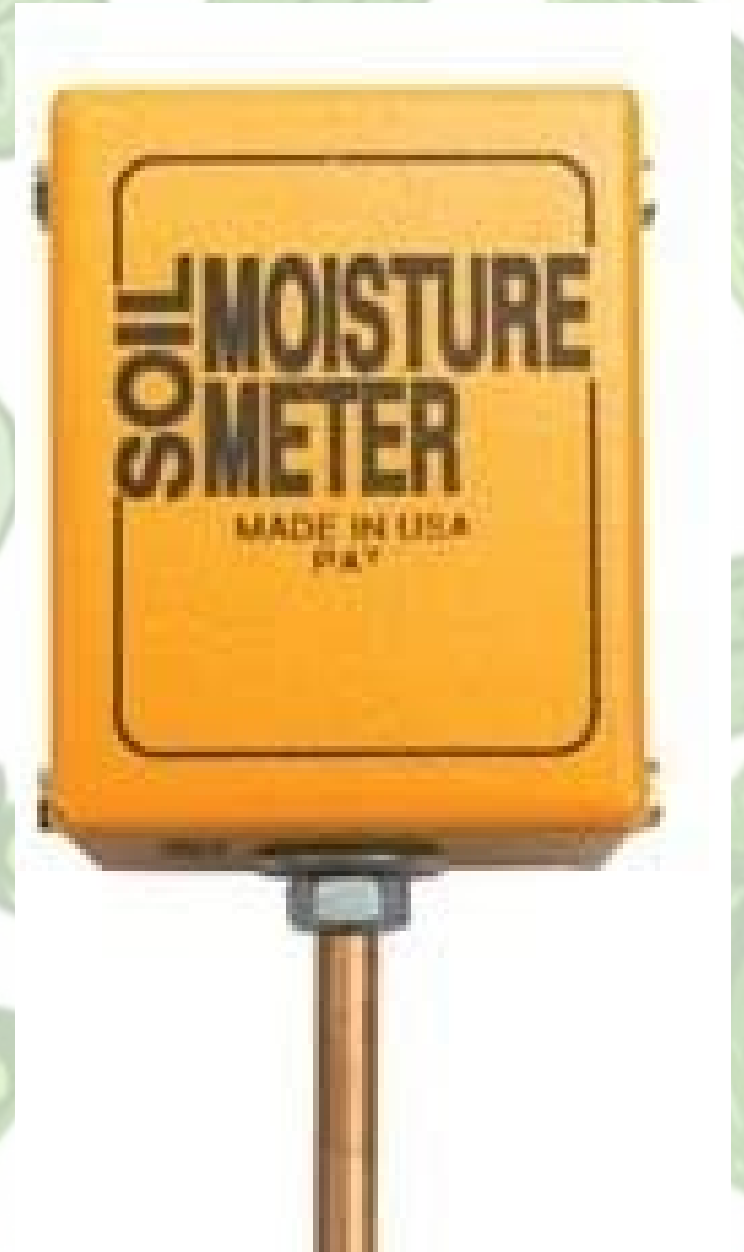
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- Moisture is the lifeblood of the metabolic processes of the microbes.
 - Water provides the medium for chemical reactions, nutrient transport, and allows for organism place to place movement.
 - Water is a medium for heat exchange.



Optimum moisture content is 45-60%
>65% anaerobic conditions develop
< 40% bacteria are inhibited
<35% can create dust problems
<15% all biological activity ceases

Best time to get proper moisture content is when
building your pile.

Moisture meters are available
Price = \$10-\$110



Perform the Squeeze Test

Take a handful of compost from roughly 18 to 24" into the pile.
Squeeze tightly.

- If water flows freely out of your hand, the moisture content is 65% or higher – too wet.
- If a few drops of water are visible between your fingers, you are right at 60% - the upper limit.
- If you don't see any water, open your hand. If a sheen is clearly visible, moisture content will be 55 to 60%.
- If no sheen is visible and it remains in a ball, tap the ball gently. If the ball stays intact, moisture content is 50 to 55%.
- If a ball forms, but breaks apart during tapping, moisture content will be 45-50%.
- If the compost does not remain in a ball in your hand, moisture is 40-45%.
- If no ball forms, moisture content is likely below 40%. Too low.



Too Wet



Good



Too Dry

Compost Moisture Solutions

Too Wet:

- Cover with tarp (prevent influx)
- Add dry bulky materials like newspaper/straw (absorb moisture/increase airflow)
- Turn the pile
- Create good drainage conditions

Compost Moisture Solutions

Too Dry:

- Cover with tarp (prevent efflux)
- Add materials with high water content (veggies, grass clippings)
- Add water mixing as you go



Please post all your questions and results to the message board .

