

## COMPOST CHOICES—THE FACTS

**Our products are all peat free and sustainable—made from renewable crops**  
**Wool compost™**

Ready to use in pots and when planting out. Has a high natural fertility with a slow release so does not require the addition of fertilizers. 30 litre bags

**Double Strength Wool compost™**

Designed for the real gardener to mix your own potting medium, using soil or spent compost. Buy one 30 litre bag and mix at 1:1 ratio to make 60 litres for fully rooted plants or mix at the ratio of 1:2 to make 90 litres for younger plants. Can also be used on borders and is especially beneficial on lighter soils to reduce drought problems. 30 litre bags

**Lakeland Gold**

Bracken based compost with a high level of potash. Useful for top dressing on clay soils to break up the clay and good in planting pits for excellent fruiting and flowering. 40 litres

**Horsepower**

Traditional rose gardeners favourite. Fully composted and good as a soil conditioner for top dressing or when planting out. 40 litre bags

### Mail order

People often ask how long between order and delivery so I thought I would explain the logistics of shipping from our farm, here in Cumbria to your home.

Your orders arrive by phone, fax, email and post. They are then processed, details entered onto the computer and an invoice is raised. Orders are grouped into two despatch systems.

If more than 11 bags are requested then details are sent out to John (shepherd and shed man) so he can put the bags onto a pallet, wrap it in plastic and put on delivery address.

When we have a few pallets to go we ask the transport company to come and pick them up. They will normally arrive on the same day but this winter we have experienced some delays.

The farm is 2 miles up a small road which crosses the beck by a small bridge, over a cattle grid and across the unfenced fell road. This of course is never salted and as the farm is situated at 600m above sea level can be very slippery. Then it is down an extremely rough farm track and into the yard, which has been an ice skating rink for much of this winter. Sometimes the risks are just too much for the drivers—and on these occasions we may delay or we send a tractor off down to meet the lorry. The transport company takes it to their depot and then delivers to the address within 48 hours.

An order of 10 bags or less gets taken to a smaller delivery company in Penrith—this is often combined with the school/ supermarket run as it is 8 miles away. We fax them all the details and they organise the delivery notes and despatch overnight to various depots throughout the country to be delivered the following day.

Once we are sure the order has been despatched, we take payment from your credit/debit card.

If you ever have problems with your order, or need to make special arrangements for delivery, please give us a ring. We can include a greetings card if you want the compost as a present. We do attempt to get all orders out within 1 week—but we are only human and sometimes things are beyond our control!!

[www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk](http://www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk)  
01931 713281



## DALEFOOT COMPOSTS

### Mail Order Compost

### Peat free! - Why is this so important ?

The RHS and National Trust are actively encouraging people to try different peat free alternatives plus the use of mulching, and home compost making. Not only are we producing an alternative to peat compost that is truly sustainable in its own right, but we also work as environmental contractors for clients such as Natural England, the Peak District and Lake District National Park Authorities restoring habitats including upland peat bogs.



Much of the peat we use in the UK now comes from eastern Europe. Global peat extraction is having a devastating effect on wildlife habitats and this has to be stopped before these unique environments are lost. Peat is formed over thousands of years by partly decomposed

wetland plants which is compacted at a rate of 1 mm per year. This means that the loss of peat is irreversible over human timescales. To preserve the remaining peat we need to at least reduce our use of peat with the aim of totally replacing peat in the garden with some urgency.

Some plants are notoriously difficult to cater for—especially ericaceous plants ( requiring an acidic soil medium). Simon is trying hard to produce a compost especially for this market—initially by choosing bracken grown on acidic land. This means testing each area that we cut, and also testing each bale as it is added to the compost. At present this is still in the trial phase, and we need to be able to get a uniform ph level before we can present it to the market. But watch this space—the compost is being trialled and we await feedback.

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*Hello and welcome to our new customers.*

*We always look forward to getting your feedback and hearing your stories. Do contact us with any questions and we look forward to meeting many of you at this year's round of shows.*

### SPRING SHOWS

Come and see us at :-  
**May 7-10th** Malvern Spring Gardening Show  
**May 29—31st** Gardening Scotland  
**June 10-14th** Gardeners World Live NEC Birmingham

We are pleased to say that our prices will remain the same as 2008. Although costs, especially transport, have increased we have absorbed it through the new VAT rate of 15%

*"The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another."*

## ***New! Raised Bed Kits Made from Cumbrian Larch***

We are very excited to offer a kit for instant gardening – grow your own organic vegetables and herbs.

Our raised bed kit consists of 4 grooved corner posts plus 8 planks that slide into the grooves – simple!

You can easily make them higher, longer or wider.

The basic version is 1.2 m square and 12 inches high. It will sit on top of concrete or you can dig the posts into the ground. The kit comes complete with compost

Why larch?

Our larch is grown in Cumbria on our rugged hillsides where it is easily recognisable as the only conifer that sheds its leaves in the winter. In the spring it has the most beautiful bright green foliage. It grows tall and straight and benefits from a cold winter. The wood is extremely durable especially when exposed to all weathers, for it can endure constant changes from wet to dry. This means we can supply it UNTREATED (no nasty chemicals) – so you can grow truly organic vegetables. This wood is FSC certified – harvested from sustainable woodland grown to benefit the environment as well.

Why a raised bed?

The benefits are well documented but it means we can supply a proven mix of our composts to a target PH level for the best fruiting and flowering. Less cultivation means better drainage, and the soil warms up quicker for earlier planting. It means less bending down for you and less work for better crops. Raised beds are ideal for introducing children to gardening too—there is nothing more exciting than sowing and watching their own seeds grow.



Potash facts Each year as your plants flower and fruit they utilise the various essential nutrients in the soil which then need replacing for them to produce consistently and abundantly. The balance is important and for the plants to take up the all important nitrogen, they also need potash. The bracken that we use in our Wool Compost™ and Lakeland Gold has a high level of natural potash—a recipe for a bumper crop.

### **Telegraph Previews new Lakeland Gardening Catalogue**

If, like us, you are fans of Lakeland, then watch out for their new Gardening catalogue, where you will see our Double Strength wool compost in convenient 12.5 litre tubs The Telegraph review says of the catalogue “it confirms a tradition of practicality with ingenious new products” and highlights our product as on-trend with Lakeland ethos being peat free and sustainable.

Lakeland Ref : 51054 Price £7.94



We are very proud to have received the Silver Environmental Award from Cumbria Business Environment Network. Our policy has always been to create products from sustainable and natural materials but we have also looked at all aspects of the business including packaging, transport, office, safety and compliance with legislation to see where we can improve and implement changes. We have worked hard to ensure our policy and ideals are documented and recorded.

## ***Dalefoot Diary***

The arrival of our new raised bed kits has so excited Arabella (who is soon to be 4!!), that Daddy has had to install one especially for her in our veg' plot. It has been lovely pouring over the seed catalogues as she has chosen the things she wants to grow. She is very definite about growing flowers which she says will make the house smell beautiful and of course they all have to be pink! The propagator has been resurrected and will be germinating soon we hope.



We have had a 'proper' winter up here – lots of sledging and building of snowmen. Let's hope that it has killed off some of the nasties in the garden that have lingered during previous mild winters.

We have some very large tummies on the farm....only six weeks until we start lambing and there are six foals due in May. We are particularly excited about Ermintrude, my homebred Dales with the larger than life personality, who is a maiden mare. I'm not sure how she will take to motherhood, I just hope the nurturing gene kicks in.

Our environmental contracting business is very busy this month – when we try to fit in all the contracts before the birds start to nest. This week we are tending an RSPB reserve and for the Herpetological Trust creating habitat for Natterjack Toads on a small coastal site 1½ miles along a beach (hoping to avoid the spring tides on that job!!) and taking a 7½ ton excavator on to the top of Skiddaw (3000+feet) to re-wet the blanket bog for the National Park . Our work is very interesting and varied, and means that no two days are ever the same..

## **'Grow your own' makes sense in the current economic climate.**

Gloom and doom hits the country—it is time to go back to old values—a premise dear to our heart. Grow your own vegetables, save money and improve your health.

Anyone can grow their own vegetables—there are no qualifications needed and my advice would be to keep it simple. Raised beds and pots in even the smallest back garden or patio will produce the tastiest food.

I think the best things to grow are:-

Mixed lettuce leaves, especially the cut and come again varieties.

Potatoes –always worth it especially early varieties when it is such a treat to dig them up and pop them straight into the pot.

Carrots you can eat young ones without even cooking them.

Spinach—best eaten while baby leaves—keep picking them.

Beetroot—like marmite “love them or hate them”

Herbs like parsley, coriander and basil can all be picked and used as you need them.

Even plant a fruit bush or two—blackcurrants give an excellent yield of vitamin C.

*“If you can sit on the ground with your trousers down, its safe to sow your seeds.”*

*“Two handfuls of healthy soil contain more living organisms than there are people on the earth”*