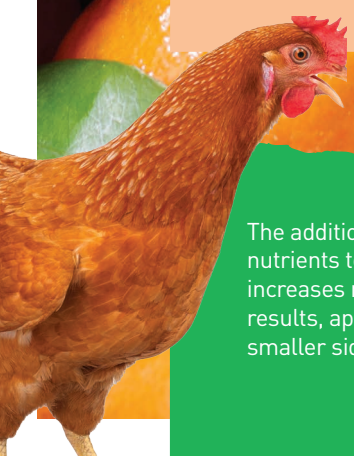
The Gardeners' Manure Cheat Sheet

Animal manure	Primary nutrients offered (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium – NPK)	Other features and benefits
Cattle	Lower in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium than poultry or pig, but balanced	• Improves soil structure, water-holding capacity, and organic matter content • Heavy and slow to break down; best composted • Once composted - gentle on plants – won't burn
Poultry (Chicken/Broiler)	Very high in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium	• Depending on the source, It may deliver good levels of potassium and sulphur but may require additional fertiliser to address other trace element deficiencies • Fast-acting, and generally, very nutrient-rich • Boosts plant growth and productivity • Can burn plants if not composted or aged properly; high ammonia
Horse	Moderate Nitrogen, Low to moderate phosphorus moderate potassium	• Improves soil aeration and tilth. • Depending on the source, can be a vector of weed seeds. • Often available in large volumes (especially in rural areas) • Less nutrients than chicken or pig manure, so more of a soil conditioner than a fertiliser
Sheep	Moderate levels of nitrogen phosphorus and potassium	• Drier and less smelly than other manures • Breaks down quickly • Great soil conditioner
Goat/Alpaca	Similar to sheep, balanced nitrogen phosphorus and potassium	• Similar benefits to sheep manure • High in organic matter however, Alpaca manure is known for its higher concentration of nutrients compared to goat manure
Pig	Moderate-high nitrogen, high phosphorus, moderate potassium	• Can be a good source of nutrients but requires careful management due to pathogens • Potential burning if not composted properly • Can create soil nutrient imbalances



The addition of well composted animal manures to garden beds will not only feed your plants valuable nutrients to your plants but also boosts the organic matter in the soil. This improves soil structure, increases moisture retention and supports a healthy population of beneficial microbes and fungi. For best results, apply larger quantities in early Autumn and Spring to prepare for peak growing seasons, then apply smaller side dressings as needed throughout the year.