

# Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians

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## *Cham Tema*

“Our Land”

### **Soboba Tribal Environmental Department**

The Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians' Tribal Environmental Department is committed to protecting, restoring, and enhancing natural resources on the Soboba Reservation for all Tribal Members: past, present, and future.



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# Composting

Compost is similar to dirt in that it is used to grow plants. One big difference of compost is that it is broken down organic matter (rather than broken down rocks) and has many nutrients that the average dirt does not provide. There are two really good reasons to compost: reducing waste and creating your own soil enhancer. Yard trimmings and food waste make up 67 million tons of the household waste that the US produced in 2010. This takes up space in landfills that we need for things that can't be reused or recycled. Fertilizer can be expensive and compost can reduce or take the place of what you would buy.

- Compost enriched soil retains fertilizers better and less runs off to pollute water.
- Compost helps sandy soil retain water and nutrients.
- Compost loosens clay or silt soil so roots can spread, water drain & air penetrate.
- Compost enriched soil has lots of beneficial organisms that burrow through soil keeping it well aerated.
- Only a 5% increase in organic material quadruples soils water holding capacity.

## How can I get started?

- Choose a location outside that is on bare ground, near a source of water, and not right next to any structure.
- Use either a pile or a bin. You can pile the material yourself or use a bin to help keep the area contained and larger animals out of it. Bins can be bought or made.
- There are 4 basic "ingredients" for a compost pile: air, water, nitrogen, and carbon. Nitrogen sources are referred to as "greens" - fresh leaves, grass clippings, or fruit/vegetables. Carbon sources are "browns" - dead leaves, woodchips, or paper.
- Alternate greens and browns in your pile or bin so that you have an equal mix.
- When finished, water well and then cover the pile with a tarp or close your bin.

- You can keep adding materials over time, but this will slow the process.
- Turn the pile weekly. You will notice that the pile is hot for a few days; then it will begin to cool. This means it is time to turn and mix the pile and add water if dry.
- Continue until the pile has a dark rich look like chocolate cake and the things you put in don't look like their original form. After it appears that the compost is done, water well, cover, and let it rest for 1-2 weeks to make sure it is completely done. If the compost is used too soon it could rob nutrients from the surrounding plants.
- After resting, it is ready to sift through a ½" strainer to remove the large chunks or simply rake through and pick out the big pieces that need more time to break down (use these in the next pile because they already have some bacteria and fungi on them). Larvae, insects, and grubs should also be removed before you add it to soil.

Start to finish, you can have completed compost in 6 weeks to 2 years. It all depends on the material, method, and the effort you put into it. The more actively you maintain the pile the faster you will receive your reward.

## For more information:

**US EPA** <http://www.epa.gov/compost/>

**Riverside County Waste Management**

<http://www.rivcowm.org/opencms/recycling/composting.html>





## Let's Go Green Shopping

“Green purchasing” means shopping with the environment in mind—buying products that help conserve natural resources, save energy, and prevent waste. It also means not

buying things you don't need. Learning about all the ways that a product can affect the environment during the course of its life cycle—from the materials used to manufacture it, to how you use it, to what you do with it when you're finished with it—helps you make smart choices.

**Buy smart.** Think before you buy something—maybe you can find an alternative to buying a product, such as renting a DVD instead of buying it or sending a free e-card instead of a paper card.

**Buy durable products.** Instead of buying disposable products, buy things that last a long time.

**Avoid excess packaging.** Look for products that have less packaging, or buy in bulk—you'll have less

to throw away. You can also buy items with packaging that can be reused or recycled.

**Buy used.** Buying things that have been used before means that your purchase doesn't use more resources or energy.

**Share with friends.** Save resources and energy by swapping with friends and family instead of buying products. Why not share things like video games instead of each of you owning the same game?

**Buy energy-efficient items.** Look for the ENERGY STAR® logo when buying electronics such as TVs, CD players, DVD players, and computers. ENERGY STAR is a program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products.

**Buy recycled.** Buying items made with recycled-content materials means that fewer natural resources, such as trees, were used to produce the products. Products made from recycled paper, plastic, and other materials are usually easy to recognize in the store—just read the labels.

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## Soboba Earth Day 2013

The Environmental Department hosted Soboba's 7th Annual Tribal Earth Day on April 18. There were 28 booths and over 475 people attended. We would like to thank everyone who came out for the good food, great information and lots of fun. If you missed it this year, keep an eye out for next year's Earth Day sometime around the national Earth Day April 22nd.





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If you have any questions on information in the newsletter or any other environmental concerns contact:

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## Conserve on Your Next Trip

School is ending and summer vacation is about to start. Before you leave, keep these things in mind to help make your trip more eco friendly.

- When making reservations at campgrounds, ask about their recycling facilities.
- Book flights with airlines that offer electronic tickets to reduce paper waste.
- Before you leave home, adjust the air conditioning and water heater thermostats to conserve energy.
- When visiting beaches and parks, make sure you don't leave anything behind, so that you leave places uncluttered and undisturbed.



- At the beach, use old buckets and other items in your house to build sand castles instead of buying new products at the store.
- When you leave your hotel room, switch off the air conditioning, lights, and TV to reduce energy use.
- To pass the time on long drives or rainy vacation days, bring scrap paper for drawing and games.
- Hot summer days require gallons of thirst quenchers. Be sure to recycle the used beverage containers. Instead of buying many small drink bottles, buy drinks or drink mixes in bulk and fill reusable bottles.



## Learning About Water Quality

Water is very important. Whether you are drinking it, eating something from it, or swimming in it, it is important to know about the quality of that water and if it is ok to use for the planned purpose. Many places have information about different types of water you may encounter.



- On the Reservation, contact the Water Department at (951) 487-7445 for drinking water or the Environmental Department at (951) 654-5544 ext 4127 for surface water.
- If you want to know about the health of water in California, check out <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/mywaterquality/>
- See if your local waterway was checked for pollution, what was found, and what is being

done. <http://watersgeo.epa.gov/mywaterway/>

- MyWATERS Mapper displays EPA Office of Water program data-the status of NPDES permits for each State; summary information from the Clean Watershed Needs Survey; and water quality assessments. <http://watersgeo.epa.gov/mwm/>
- The USGS collects, analyzes, and interprets water-quality data. Here you can find their water quality information page which is a good place to start. <http://water.usgs.gov/owq/>
- EPA has a Local Drinking Water Website with links to drinking water quality information all over the US. <http://water.epa.gov/drink/local/>
- Heal the Bay puts out report cards on West Coast beaches based on their water quality. To check



how the beach you plan to visit is doing, visit their website or download their app. <http://brc.healthebay.org/>