

What is Compost?

Composting is our way of speeding up Mother Nature's decomposition process.

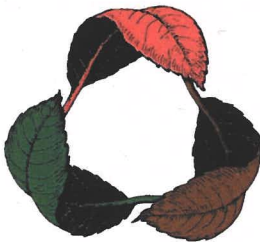
Compost is a dark, crumbly and earthy-smelling material made up of decomposed organic matter such as food scraps, leaves, grass clippings and wood chips. Compost contains living organisms that require food, oxygen and water to survive.

50:50 Brown to Green Ratio

It is important when composting to maintain a balance between carbon based materials (browns) and nitrogen based materials (greens).

High Nitrogen Green

materials include:
Grass clippings, weeds, food waste (fruits & veggies, coffee grounds, tea bags, egg shells) manure (cow, horse, chicken, rabbit), seaweed, alfalfa hay, blood meal



High Carbon Brown materials include:

Autumn leaves, straw, cornstalks, paper/cardboard, wood chips, saw dust and pine needles



Why Compost?

There are many benefits to composting. It is a simple and inexpensive way to dispose of and recycle food scraps and yard waste that would otherwise enter the waste stream. Compost also helps improve the health and quality of the soil that it is added to.

Composting:

- Reduces the volume of garbage
- Saves money on disposal costs
- Enriches and adds nutrients to the soil
- Improves soil structure for better root growth, increased moisture and nutrient retention
- Balances acid and alkalinity (pH) of the soil
- Suppresses disease and harmful pests
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers

DO Compost:

- Any vegetable or fruitscraps
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Tea bags (remove staples)
- Newspaper, paper towels
- Leaves and grass clippings

DO NOT Compost:

- Meat
- Fish and dairy products
- Diseased plants
- Pet waste
- Cat litter
- Fats and oils
- Wood and charcoal ash
- Grass clippings treated with herbicides
- Non-organic material like plastic and metal



How to Compost

1. Choose an area that is not in direct sunlight and is an easily accessible spot on grass or soil. Place the compost bin away from the house.
2. Start with a 6" layer of woody stalks or corn stalks at the bottom of the pile. Alternate 4" layers of brown material and 2" layers of green material. Add water as needed. Sprinkle with soil every 12 inches. Be sure to bury food scraps in the middle of the pile. If you don't have "brown" and "green" materials on hand at the same time, build your pile with "browns" and mix in "greens" as they become available.
3. Add water as you build the pile if the materials are dry. Keep the composting material damp or it will not decompose.
4. As time goes on, keep oxygen available to the compost critters by fluffing the pile with a hoe or compost turning tool each time you add material. A complete turning of the pile - so the top becomes the bottom - in spring and fall should result in finished compost within a year. More frequent turning will shorten the composting time.
5. The compost is ready when it looks dark and crumbly and the starting ingredients are no longer visible.

Troubleshooting

Problem	Solution
Compost smells	Turn the pile and add browns
Too wet	Turn the pile and add dry material
Too dry	Turn the pile and add water, then shade
Cool to the touch	Add more greens

WHEN IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT!