

COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the process of decomposing or breaking down organic material. The organic material can be plant material or animal matter. While composting may seem like a very complicated and difficult thing, back yard composting is simple. It involves combining yard debris (like grass clippings and fallen leaves) and kitchen scraps (such as fruit and vegetable spoils) into an environment suitable for decomposition.

Benefits of composting

- Provides a nutrient rich "super soil" to add to your garden, lawn and house plants
- Takes as little as 10 minutes a week to collect and dispose of scraps
- Reduces use of artificial fertilizers and pesticides
- Can reduce household waste by **30%**
- Improves soil texture and water holding capacity when added to soil
- Reduces dependence on gasoline for transport to landfills
- Reduces the size of our landfills which reduces methane gases, one of the most harmful greenhouse gases
- Inhibits incidence of plant diseases
- Compost can bind and degrade specific pollutants where used as an amendment.¹

By composting **and** recycling, you can reduce the amount of waste you generate by up to 80%. It quickly becomes routine and makes a big difference. The added bonus is that the compost you generate will make your garden and lawn healthier and less dependent on chemicals, fertilizers and watering.



HOW TO COMPOST FROM YOUR KITCHEN

What to compost

Composting will work best if it is fed a diet of green (nitrogen-rich) and brown (carbon-rich) materials. Below is a list of kitchen and yard waste “greens” and “browns” that will create the best compost.

¹ Information collected from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Composting Council of Canada

KITCHEN GREENS

Fruit scraps, vegetable scraps
Houseplant cuttings
Coffee grounds
Rice & pasta
Egg shells
Tea bags



KITCHEN BROWNS

Coffee filters, stale bread
Paper napkins & towel
Dryer lint
Hairs



YARD GREENS

Flowers
Vegetables
Plant trimmings
Hedge clippings
Grass (small amounts)



YARD BROWNS

Leaves
Straw or hay
Small twigs/chips
Dried grass and weeds



Steps to composting

Composting is easy – it happens on its own. However, there are a few things you can do to speed up the composting process. Just follow these three steps.



CHOP

It helps to chop up larger items like watermelon rinds or corn cobs before putting them in composter. Many people use a small kitchen container with a top to collect scraps and then empty weekly. A composter can be an open container or closed container.



STIR

Mix the new material into the existing pile or a new pile using a commercial compost turner, pitchfork or other garden tool. Stirring adds oxygen, a key component to successful composting. Composting takes several weeks and you if you continually add new compost to your bin then your pile will always be “in process” of decomposing. Some people use 2 bins so they have one pile that has completed processing. The second will be “in process”.



COVER

Cover your food waste with a handful of old leaves, other dried yard waste or soil. This will add carbon and reduce the chance of odors and fruit flies. Then if your bin can be closed, put the lid back on and let it “cook”. You should also periodically add some water so the pile has the moisture level of a wrung out sponge.

USING THE FINISHED PRODUCT

IN YOUR GARDEN

Spread compost in your vegetable or flower garden or pots in spring or fall, and work it into the soil.

ON YOUR LAWN

Top-dress your lawn with compost in the spring or fall. This will help maintain healthy soil structure and build your topsoil. It helps to screen the compost first so it spreads easily.

AROUND TREES & SHRUBS

Spreading compost around the base of trees or shrubs is another easy way to put your compost to use. Your trees and shrubs will love you for it.

COMPOST TEA

Compost tea is created by soaking a bag full of compost in a bucket full of water for an hour or so. The water soluble nutrients and beneficial microorganisms leach out of the compost, resulting in a brown liquid that can be used to water houseplants, your lawn, or garden plants. Compost tea will give your plants a boost of needed nutrients and help to prevent a lot of plant diseases.

HELPFUL LINKS

For more detailed information and tips on composting check out the following link:

[*It's Gotten Rotten\(video\)*](#)