

COMPOSTING TIPS

- Turn or mix the compost pile regularly to keep the pile oxygenated
- To keep the temperature as warm as possible, locate in a sunny area, try an insulation jacket, and choose a black bin
- Keep the moisture content around 50%. Use rain water from your rain barrel! (Chlorine can harm organisms)
- Maximize surface area by shredding and chipping materials
- The General Rule of Thumb is to use 2-3 parts BROWNS to 1 part GREENS.

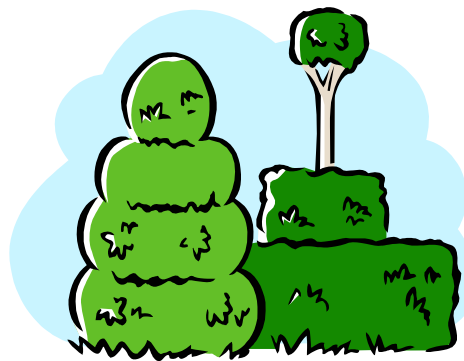
BROWN material provides bulk and aeration to the pile while GREEN material provides needed moisture and nutrients!

WHAT TO COMPOST

Plant material from the garden
Grass clippings
Leaves
Twigs
Wood chips
Vegetable and fruit scraps
Coffee grounds
Tea bags
Corn husks
Manure

WHAT NOT TO COMPOST

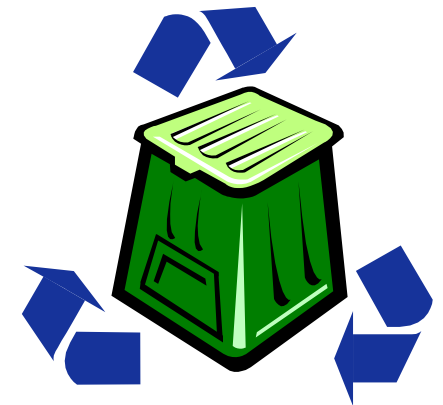
Diseased or rotting plant material
Citrus peels
Eucalyptus leaves
Pine needles
Greasy foods
Dairy products
Meat
Bones
Ashes
Human or Pet Excrement
Plastic or other household waste



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Backyard Composting Made Easy



Nature has its own method of solid waste management!

Composting is the natural degradation of organic materials. Though all organic materials will eventually decompose naturally, the process can be helped along by controlling the conditions under which decomposition occurs.

The right combination of oxygen, temperature, moisture, and microbes, helps speed the decomposition of organic materials into a nutrient-rich finished product called compost. Compost is a humus-like product that can be used as a soil amendment to enhance your soil's texture, nutrient levels, and water-holding capacity. Adding compost as a mulch can also smother small annual weeds.

Compost is ready to use when it has decayed enough so that the individual ingredients can no longer be distinguished. It will be dark and crumbly.

Why purchase expensive topsoil when you can create your own through backyard composting?

CHOOSING A SITE & STARTING A PILE

Choose a site that is level and unobtrusive to neighbors. The site should receive a lot of sun and should not be damp, closed-in, or heavily shaded.

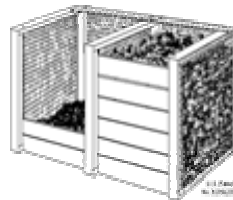
Compost piles should be started in layers as follows:

- 1st layer - Place loose/bulky material over bare ground (twigs) to allow air movement
- 2nd layer - place BROWNS over this
- 3rd layer - add a good soil layer to "inoculate" with microbes
- 4th layer - place GREENS over this to provide Nitrogen
- Keep aerated by turning periodically

WHAT ABOUT THE CRITTERS IN MY PILE?

Several weeks after starting your compost pile, you may notice worms and insects in your pile. These creatures belong there! Do not try to eliminate them, as they aid in the decomposition process.

There are many types of commercial compost bins available for purchase. You can also build your own! Here are some examples:



BROWNS = leaves, twigs, wood chips, sawdust, coffee, tea bags, egg shells

GREENS = grass, fruit, vegetables, garden clippings

