

COMPOSTING BASICS



What to compost:

Fruits and vegetables	Leaves
Eggshells	Sawdust
Coffee grounds and filters	Wood chips
Nut shells	Cotton and Wool Rags
Shredded newspaper	Hair and fur
Cardboard	Fireplace ashes
Paper	Houseplants
Yard trimmings	Grass clippings

What not to compost:

Dairy products
Diseased or insect ridden plants
Meat
Bones
Pet wastes
Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides
Coal or charcoal ash
Black walnut tree leaves or twigs

HOW TO COMPOST

Composting is the combining and managing of specific waste materials so that they decompose. Once the materials are mixed together, microbes in the soil will start to breakdown the waste and turn it into the nutrient-rich material that helps plants grow. By composting, you are not only creating something that helps keep plants healthy, but you are keeping compostable waste products like food scraps and yard waste out of landfills.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Brown material to produce carbon:

Dead leaves, branches and twigs, sawdust or wood chips, coffee filters, cotton and wool rags, shredded pieces of paper, cardboard or newspaper and shredded nut shells.



Green material to produce nitrogen:

Grass clippings and leaves, fruit and vegetable scraps, hair, lint, tea and coffee grounds



Water



1 Select a dry, shady spot near a water source.

Ideal size for your compost area is 3 feet wide by 3 feet deep by 3 feet tall (1 cubic yard). You can buy a bin, use chicken wire, or just isolate an area of ground for your compost heap.



2 Add brown and green material in alternate layers.

Try and keep the ratio roughly 3 parts browns to 1 part greens. Make sure larger pieces of material are chopped or shredded.



3 Keep the compost moist [but not too wet].

Moisture helps with the breakdown of organic matter.



4 Occasionally turn your compost mixture to provide aeration.

This helps speed up the composting process and keeps things airy, which cuts the risk of things getting smelly.



5 As materials breakdown, the pile will get warm.

There might even be steam. Don't be alarmed. That means it's working. Now you just have to wait.



6 All done!

When material is dark with no remnants of food or waste, your compost is ready. Add it to lawns and gardens or anywhere that could benefit from some good soil.

WHAT NOT TO COMPOST

Metal, glass, and other products that do not easily breakdown, coal or charcoal ash, diseased or insect-ridden plants, black walnut tree leaves and twigs, pet waste, bones, meat, fats, oils dairy products and eggs (egg shells are OK), and yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides.