

Compost

BASICS

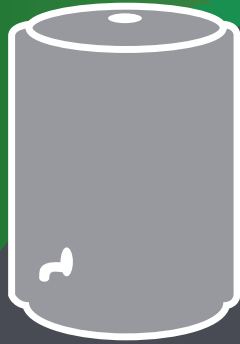
What is composting?

Composting is the breakdown of organic materials by microorganisms under controlled conditions where oxygen is available. Anybody can compost, all you need is a little space, water, air, and organic material. Compost will happen!

Composting is important because 20 percent or more of household waste is organic material that can be composted, rather than disposed, thus saving landfill space. Compost is a valuable soil amendment that will help your plants thrive. Composting is just good for the environment.

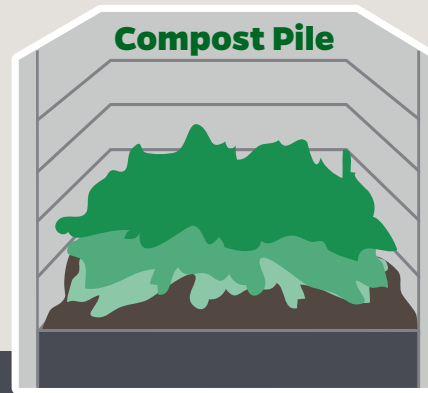
Why Compost?

- Around 133 million pounds of food in the USA each year—or about 40 percent of total production—is wasted, according to The USDA.
- The average household wastes more than \$1,500 annually on unused food items.
- Roughly 25 percent of landfilled material is organic and can be composted.
- Food waste breaking down in landfills creates carbon dioxide and methane, gases that contribute to climate change.



Compost Pile Components

1. Browns - carbon (woody materials)
2. Greens - nitrogen (food waste)
3. Water - pile should feel like a damp sponge
4. Air - composting is an aerobic process



Meet Your Composting Team

“Aerobic” composting involves microbes requiring oxygen.

Bacteria

- Psychrophilic, 55° - 70°F
- Mesophilic, 70° - 100°F
- Thermophilic, 113° - 160°F, stabilizes after 3-5 days

Macro-organisms:

- Fungi, 70°F
- Sowbugs and pillbugs
- Millipedes and centipedes
- Spiders
- Earthworms

Building a Pile

Microbes are not much different than people in terms of their basic needs, so be sure to provide your microbes with all of the basics:

FOOD Browns (carbon-rich) and greens (nitrogen-rich)

WATER Moist, not soggy

AIR Oxygen

VOLUME Cube: 3 feet long x 3 feet high x 3 feet deep
Cylinder: 3 feet high x 3-5 feet diameter

PARTICLE SIZE Less than 2-3 inches

The Benefits of Composting

1. Less waste in landfills.
2. Improves soil's ability to retain water and reduce the need to irrigate.
3. Improves soil health and provides nutrients to plants.
4. Reduces soil erosion and controls runoff.

DO Compost these:

Browns



Greens



DO NOT Compost these:

