

Why Compost?

- It improves soil drainage in clay soils and retains moisture in sandy soils to decrease watering needs and nutrient leaching.
- It suppresses certain plant diseases.
- It reduces the need for pesticides/fungicides by adding beneficial microbes and fungi to the soil.
- It can boost crop and flower yields.
- It recovers valuable organic waste from the yard and kitchen.
- It prevents soil erosion.
- It can fulfill the fertilizer needs for plants
- Saves money and the environment.
- It improves soil structure.
- It recycles organic matter back into the soil where it improves overall soil health.
- It saves landfill space and reduces methane production.

Getting Started

1. Gather green and brown yard waste. Green yard trimmings are high in nitrogen (N) and include grass clippings, fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, sod, weeds (do NOT compost invasive weeds, annual weeds that have gone to seed, or plants that spread by underground roots or runners), and manure from plant eating animals. Brown yard trimmings are high in carbon (C) and include shredded paper, leaves, pine cones and needles (should be shredded and not make up more than 10% of the mix), and sawdust and wood shavings (are high in C and will require extra N (green materials), do not use sawdust from pressure treated wood).
2. In a heap or bin mix two parts brown yard materials with one part green yard materials.
3. Adding a small amount of garden soil and chopping up leaves before mixing them into the pile will both speed the composting process.
4. Add water so compost is kept as moist as a wrung-out sponge.
5. Turn the pile every week. (Not necessary, but will speed the process)

6. When the ingredients are black and no longer recognizable you have finished compost. This will take between 4 weeks to one year depending on frequency of turning and how well you maintain the moisture of the pile.

COMPOSTING LINKS

How Composting Works

<http://www.howstuffworks.com/composting.htm/printable>

University of Wisconsin Extension

[Composting Short Course](#)

University of Minnesota Extension

[Structures for Backyard Composting](#)

Ohio State University Extension

[Composting at Home](#)

Florida's On-Line Composting Center

www.compostinfo.com

Master Composter

<http://www.mastercomposter.com/>