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COMPOSTING



NATURE'S RECYCLING

DID YOU KNOW?

According to MDE, compostable materials such as food scraps and yard trimmings make up nearly 30% of all municipal solid waste generated in the U.S. Instead of disposing of this material in landfills and incinerators, composting uses organic material to create a valuable product with environmental and economic benefits.

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the controlled aerobic decomposition of raw organic materials (such as food scraps, yard trimmings, leaves, etc.) via fungi, bacteria, and other microbes in order to create compost, a dark, crumbly, earthy smelling soil amendment.

BENEFITS:



Reduces waste by diverting organic materials from the landfill; wasted food is the single largest component of everyday garbage.



Enhances soil by increasing nutrient content, microbe biodiversity, water holding capacity, and improving soil structure.



Protects the planet by reducing methane emissions from landfills and sequestering carbon in the soil. Composting also protects water quality and prevents erosion.

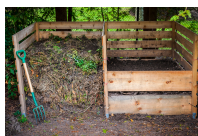
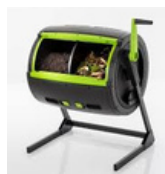


Saves money by reducing the need for expensive fertilizers and reducing solid waste management costs.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN COMPOST:

1 Choose a Location and System

Choose a convenient, well drained location to compost. Keep piles away from trees to reduce likelihood of roots growing into the compost.



2 Build and Add to Compost Pile

THE RECIPE:



2 parts browns to 1 part greens by volume.
Be sure to chop tough food scraps (1" or less in size) and yard trimmings (6" or smaller).

3 Mix/Layer the Ingredients

- Lasagna method: layer greens and browns, OR
- Make a small hole in the pile, add greens, then cover with browns, OR
- Mix greens and browns separately, then add to pile, OR
- If using a tumbler, add the correct ratio of ingredients all at once or over time.
- No food scraps should be visible in the pile; keep a 4-6" layer of browns on top to prevent odors and critters.

4 Aerate & Mix Regularly

Mix, tumble, or turn based on the system used. Composting is an aerobic process, microbes need air to breathe!

5 Monitor Moisture and Temperature

- Composting microbes create heat; a temperature of 122-140°F indicates rapid decomposition is occurring.
- Water as needed to create a wrung-out sponge consistency.

6 Cure Compost Before Use

Stop adding to the system and allow pile to cure for a minimum of 4 weeks.

✓ COMPOST THESE:

GREENS	BROWNS
Fruit & Vegetable Scraps (no stickers)	Fallen Leaves
Egg Shells	Plant Stalks (6" or smaller)
Coffee Grounds & Paper Filters	Wood Chips & Shavings (not chemically treated)
Tea Bags (no staples or plastic)	Shredded Paper, Brown Bags (no glossy pages)
Garden Trimmings (6" or smaller)	Cut up Cardboard (not glossy, no tape)

AVOID THESE:

Meat, Fish, or Bones	Fats, Oils, or Grease
Eggs or Dairy Products	Baked Goods
Produce Stickers	Pet Waste & Kitty Litter
Glossy Paper, Wrapping Paper	Treated or Painted Wood
Diseased or Pest-Infested Plants	Herbicide Treated Plants
Weeds with Seeds	Dryer Lint
"Compostable" Tableware & Plastic Bags	Used Tissues, Diapers

TROUBLESHOOTING

Problem:	Solution:
Odor	Add more browns, turn the pile
Too Wet	Add more dry browns, turn the pile
Too Dry	Add water throughout the pile and turn
Cool to the Touch	Add more greens, turn the pile

Adapted from:
Institute for Local Self Reliance. (Oct. 2021). Composting 101. www.cdn.ilsr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Shared-ILSR-Composting-101-Training-Guide.pdf.
"EPA's Wasted Food Scale." EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, 15 Dec. 2023. www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/composting. Accessed 02 Apr. 2024.