

Backyard Composting Made Easy

Compost also known as “BLACK GOLD” is a nutrient rich Humus for our Lawns & garden obtained through natural recycling of organic material like food & garden waste.



WHY COMPOST?

Minimize Greenhouse gas emissions by reducing trash & food waste going in landfills & incinerators

Replenishes Soil erosion & Nutrients

Saves \$\$ on chemical fertilizers

Enhances Soil ability to retain water and entrap CO₂ from the atmosphere

Reduces Plant diseases

Cleaner AIR, WATER & SOIL

Creates Green Jobs

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home
- www.compostingcouncil.org/page/Education
- <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs811/>

READ 1. Backyard Composting by Harmonious Technologies

The Rodale Guide to Composting by R.A. Simpson,

Join Rutgers Master Gardeners @
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/mastergardeners/>

A head of lettuce takes **25 years** to decompose in a landfill.

According to EPA, food scraps & yard waste together currently make up more than **28%** of what we throw away.

Key Concepts

Brown (DRY) Material is Carbon rich like branches, stems, dried leaves, shredded brown paper bags, straw, wood ash

Green (WET) Material is Nitrogen or protein-rich matter like fruit & veggie scraps, fresh grass clippings, manures, coffee grounds

Water is needed for Microorganisms to survive

Aeration adds oxygen to the pile, speeding the decomposition process. Too much oxygen can dry out the pile.

Temperature: Optimal temperature of 120-150 °F is required to promote rapid composting & to destroy pathogens, else anaerobic conditions like rotting occurs.

CHECK NEXT PAGE to GET STARTED

Basics of Composting

Bin or Pile: A pile is great for just leaves & grass clippings but use of a bin is required to incorporate food waste to prevent rodents. Variety of Bins available at retail or online store

Choose Compost Location with at least one cubic yard of area available for your compost pile or bin and is dry, accessible, well drained & near a water source.

Establish Bottom layer with twigs or straw, a few inches deep, aids in aeration & drainage

Place Green & Brown material in alternate layers of varying sizes (generally larger proportion of brown than green). Chop or shred large pieces to increase surface area

Keep Compost Moist by adding water in between layers of the compost, avoid over-soaking.

Maintain optimal temperature & moisture by checking frequently.

Mix & Turn the contents of the pile frequently with a pitchfork, shovel or bin turner. You may see steam as heat is generated as soil organisms decompose organic material.

Check & Harvest the compost: When the material at the bottom is dark rich in color, an earthy smelling, your compost is ready to use. This process can take two months to two years.

GREENS to ADD

Nitrogen Rich Materials

Fruits and vegetables Scraps
Coffee grounds & filters
Tea bags (remove Staple)
Fresh Leaves
Green plants
Prunings & Hedge trimmings
Grass clippings
Flower bouquets
Herbs & Seaweed
Houseplants

BROWNS to Add

Carbon Rich Materials

Eggshells & Nut shells
Small twigs, Hay & Straw
Wood chips & Wood Ashes
Sawdust
Shredded Newspaper
Fall Leaves
Corncobs
Old potting soil
Pet Hair & Fur

DO NOT ADD

Black walnut tree leaves twig
Coal or charcoal ash
Dairy products
Diseased plants
Fats, grease, lard, or oils
Meat or fish bones / scraps
Pet wastes & litter
Yard trimmings treated with chemicals
Bleached or Glossy papers
Any Plastic, Metal or Glass
Anything with Glue
Invasive weeds/plants
Sticky Labels From Produce

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