

Why Compost?



If you have a yard that generates most any kind of green waste, you probably have the right ingredients and enough room to set up your own compost bin. Composting is easy and cheap, you can cut down your garbage by hundreds of pounds each year, and create a mixture that can be used to improve the soil.



What's compostable? (and what isn't?)

Learning the basics: "Green" and "Brown"

Like any simple recipe, you'll get the best results if you use the right mix of ingredients to make your compost. The key materials are nitrogen-rich "greens," carbon-rich "browns," water, and air. All of these are essential, but they're easy to mix together for quality compost.

Greens provide nitrogen, and act as a source of protein for the microbes in your compost pile.

- Green leaves
- Coffee grounds
- Tea bags
- Plant trimmings
- Raw fruit
- Hair
- Vegetable scraps
- Fresh grass clippings



Browns are a source of carbon, and provide energy for the microbes.

- Dried grasses
- Dried leaves
- Some dried weeds
 - Straw
- Woodchips
 - Twigs
- Branches
- Sawdust
- Corncobs & stalks
- Shredded newspaper

Just say no. While many materials can be composted, there are some items that you should keep out of your home compost pile.

- Food with meat, dairy or oils
- Pet feces (dog, cat or bird)
- Diseased plants
- Weeds gone to seed
- Ash from charcoal or coal

reduce.org



Using finished compost

Your compost can really pay off in the yard or garden. While compost is not a fertilizer, it can contain nutrients which improve plant growth. By using compost, you can improve the soil and reduce your use of fertilizer and water.

You'll learn why gardeners call compost "black gold."

- Mix in compost to improve soil. In sandy soils, compost acts like a sponge, retaining water and nutrients where it can be reached by plant roots. In clay soils, compost makes the ground more porous, creating tiny holes and passageways that help soil drain more quickly.
- Spread compost on your lawn to help fill in low spots.
- Use as a mulch for landscaping and garden plants. Mulches cover the soil around plants, protecting the soil from erosion and the drying effects of wind and sun.
- Mix compost into pots for potted plants.



reduce.org