**GUIDE TO BACKYARD COMPOSTING**

**WHY COMPOST?**
When you compost, you can reduce what you are sending to the landfill by about 50 percent! It’s even easier than recycling!

**HOW TO COMPOST**

1. **DECIDE ON A LOCATION THAT HAS:**
   - Easy access for your convenience.
   - Bare soil for microorganisms to enter the compost from beneath.
   - Flat ground for good drainage.

2. **ORGANIZE INDOORS:**
   - Collect food scraps in the kitchen in a container with a tight lid to keep fruit flies away/minimize odor — or store in your fridge/freezer.
   - Chop up larger items like watermelon and pumpkins.

3. **ADD YOUR INGREDIENTS:**
   - Empty your kitchen container into your compost bin once a week.
   - Stir in your new material to the top layer.
   - Cover your food scraps with a three-inch layer of leaves, etc.

4. **HARVEST:**
   - Wait six to twelve months and let nature do its work. It’s ready when the compost is dark brown and earth-like!

**THE FOUR SEASONS OF COMPOSTING**

**SPRING:** Stir your bin and add some dirt to kickstart it.

**SUMMER:** Stir your bin. If the material looks dry, add some water to moisten it.

**FALL:** Stir your bin.

**WINTER:** Decomposition slows down; let your bin fill up.
Your bin will work best if it’s fed a varied diet of nitrogen-rich greens and carbon-rich browns.

**FRESH GREENS**
- Nitrogen-Rich
  - Grass and plant trimmings
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Rice and legumes
  - Tea leaves and coffee grounds
- Egg shells
- Bread

**DRY BROWNS**
- Carbon-Rich
  - Dead leaves, straw and hay
  - Broken up sticks and wood chips
  - Coffee filters
  - Compostable paper products *(No plastic-lining; tear up)*
  - Shredded paper
  - Paper towels and napkins

**KEEP THESE OUT!**
- Plastic-coated (shiny) paper plates
- Meat, fish and bones*
- Food cooked with grease
- Dairy products
- Certified compostable products*
- Plastic-coated (shiny) to-go containers
- To-go hot and cold drink cups
- Snack wrappers

* Meat, fish, bones, and compostable products like hot and cold cups, cutlery and to-go containers are compostable ONLY in commercial compost piles, not in your back yard.

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