

GUIDE TO BACKYARD COMPOSTING



WHY COMPOST?

When you compost, you can reduce what you send to the landfill by about a quarter! It's nature's way of recycling!

HOW TO COMPOST

1

DECIDE ON A LOCATION THAT HAS:

- Easy access for your convenience.
- A few feet of space from fences, tall grass, and other hiding places for vectors.
- 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 tough items like watermelon rinds and corn cobs.



3

ADD YOUR INGREDIENTS:

- Start with a 6-inch base of browns to absorb excess liquid from food scraps.
- Empty your kitchen container into your compost bin as needed, making sure to add twice as much browns when you do.
- Cover your food scraps with a three-inch layer of leaves or other brown materials.



4

HARVEST:

- Wait six to twelve months and let nature do its work, or aerate with a pitchfork or shovel and add water as needed to speed up the process. It's ready when the compost no longer heats up, is dark brown with an earthy smell, and material has broken down completely.



THE FOUR SEASONS OF COMPOSTING

SPRING:

Add soil or compost and mix well to kick-start the process.



SUMMER:

If your pile is getting smelly, add more browns. If the material looks dry, add more water.



FALL:

Gather leaves to use year-round. Add clean, unpainted pumpkins.



WINTER:

As the temperature drops, decomposition will slow down or pause but will automatically resume after it warms.



COMPOST

INCLUDE THE FOOD, PLANTS AND PAPER TOO!



Your bin will work best if it's fed a varied diet of nitrogen-rich greens and carbon-rich browns. Remember to keep a 3:1 ratio of browns to greens.

GREENS

NITROGEN-RICH



Grass clippings and garden trimmings
(no weeds with seeds)



Fruit and vegetable scraps
(no stickers)



Egg shells
(crushed)



Tea leaves and bags
(no staples or plastic)



Coffee grounds and filters

BROWNS

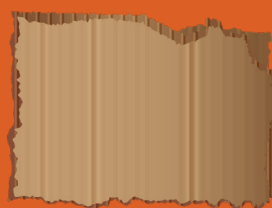
CARBON-RICH



Fall leaves and straw



Twigs and untreated wood chips/shavings



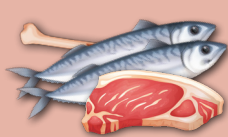
Shredded cardboard
(no wax coating/tape/glue)



Shredded newspaper and brown bags
(no glossy bags)

NO PRODUCE BAGS, STICKERS, TWIST TIES, STAPLES, OR RUBBER BANDS.

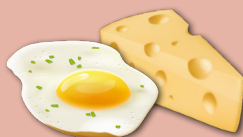
KEEP THESE OUT!



Meat, fish, and bones*



Cooked food, fats, oils, and grease*



Eggs and dairy products*



Produce stickers



Compostable food service ware and compostable bags*



Glossy paper



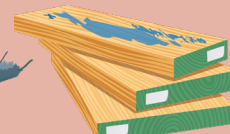
Diseased and pest-infested plants



Herbicide-treated plants and grass



Dryer lint



Chemically-treated and painted wood



Pet waste and cat litter

* These items are compostable **ONLY** in commercial compost piles, not at home.