

General composting info. by Leanne N.:

COMPOST NEEDS: Water, Oxygen, Heat, Microorganisms, Macro organisms, Green (Nitrogen-Rich) Material, and Brown (Carbon-Rich) Material.

WATER: The pile should be as wet as a squeezed out sponge. Water if needed in summer.

OXYGEN: Turn pile AT LEAST once a week.

HEAT In winter, cold will slow process, but won't stop completely. Make sure the pile is heaped up to retain the most heat possible.

MICRO/MACRO-ORGANISMS: They will show up. Starters are a waste of money. You can help speed things up by adding some old compost to a new pile.

GREEN MATERIAL: DO ADD: Finely chopped kitchen scraps, veggie and fruit scraps, coffee grounds with filters, tea bags.

Grass Clippings (few, dry)

Weeds (non-poisoned and without seeds)

Manure (from a vegetarian: cows and horses)

DO **NOT** ADD:- Little plastic stickers on bananas
- Rubber bands on broccoli stems
- Cooked foods, meats, fish, bones, oils
- Weeds with seeds * because they require a higher temperature (140-150 °F) for several days or (120 °F) for several weeks to destroy seeds.
- Plants infected by insects *
- Ivy or succulents* unless they've been chopped up and dried out in the sun to prevent growth in the pile.
- Salad with dressing.
- Egg shells, fruit/veggie pits, or corn cobs (can be dried and used for fire fuel!) because they all take too long to decompose.

* These can be destroyed by putting them in a black plastic bag and leaving them in full sun.

BROWN MATERIAL: DO ADD: Leaves, Twigs (< 1/4" diameter), and Straw (carbon-rich)

DO **NOT** ADD:- Pine needles - They are too acidic for general use, although strawberries love it)
- Walnut Leaves and Nuts - They prevent growth where they fall. We have a walnut tree by our western neighbors. Don't worry about the leaves too much. One tree won't spoil the pile, but do **NOT** add the nuts.

The pile will compost faster the smaller the ingredients are. DO chop up big scraps (i.e. grapefruit rinds) and DO NOT add twigs larger than 1/4" in diameter.

To keep FLIES down: Cover freshly added food scraps with leaves and composted material.

To keep ODOR down: Add more brown material or break up large green clumps and mix well.

The compost pile should consist of

25% - 50% Green (Heat Agent)

50% - 75% Brown (Anti-Stink Agent)

Compost is ready when it is reduced to a crumbly humus-rich soil; sweet, clean aroma; Heat dissipated. Allow a few days for beneficial bugs and worms to migrate to new pile.

TO USE: Mix compost into soil before planting or use like mulch around growing plants. Nutrients will leach into soil at a natural rate.

COMPOST TROUBLE SHOOTING

<u>CONCERN</u>	<u>POSSIBLE CAUSES</u>	<u>SOLUTION</u>
Rotten odor straw;	excess moisture (anaerobic conditions)	turn pile, add dry, porous materials, such as leaves, sawdust, wood chips, or
	compaction	turn pile, or make smaller
Ammonia Odor material	too much green matter	add brown (carbon) such as leaves, wood chips, or straw
Low Pile Temp. sides pile	pile too small	make pile bigger/insulate
	insufficient moisture	add water while turning
	poor aeration lack of greens (nitrogen)	turn pile add greens like grass clippings, manure, or food scraps.
	cold weather	insulate pile with an extra layer of material, such as
straw		
High Pile Temp. reduce pile size (+140 Degrees F)	pile too large	
	insufficient ventilation	turn pile
Pests: rats, raccoons, foods or insects layer	Presence of meat scraps or fatty waste	remove meat and fatty from pile, or cover with a of soil, leaves or sawdust.