

HOME COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the combining and managing of specific waste materials so that they decompose. Once the materials are mixed together, microbes in the soil will start to breakdown the waste and turn it into the nutrient-rich material that helps plants grow.

WHAT NOT TO ADD TO YOUR COMPOST PILE:

- Meat or fish
- Coal ash
- Animal waste
- Nappies and used tissues
- Dairy products
- Cooked foods
- Coloured or treated paper
- Chemically treated wood
- Diseased (treated) plants
- Persistent weeds

WHAT TO ADD TO YOUR COMPOST PILE:

- Hair and fur
- Shredded paper
- Straw and hay
- Animal bedding and sawdust
- Crushed egg shells
- Grass and plant cuttings
- Raw fruit and vegetable trimmings
- Teabags and coffee granules
- Horse manure
- Leaves



1 Select a dry, shady spot near a water source.

Ideal size for your compost area is 3 feet wide by 3 feet deep by 3 feet tall (1 cubic yard). You can buy a bin, use chicken wire, or just isolate an area of ground for your compost heap.



2 Add brown and green material in alternate layers.

Try and keep the ratio roughly 3 parts browns to 1 part greens. Make sure larger pieces of material are chopped or shredded.



3 Keep the compost moist [but not too wet].

Moisture helps with the breakdown of organic matter.



4 Occasionally turn your compost mixture to provide aeration.

This helps speed up the composting process and keeps things airy, which cuts the risk of things getting smelly.



5 As materials breakdown, the pile will get warm.

There might even be steam. Don't be alarmed. That means it's working. Now you just have to wait.



6 All done!

When material is dark with no remnants of food or waste, your compost is ready. Add it to lawns and gardens or anywhere that could benefit from some good soil.

VERMICOMPOSTING

Vermicomposting is a method of composting using a special kind of earthworm known as a red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*), which eats its weight in organic matter each day. Vermicomposting is typically done in a covered container with a bedding of dirt, newspaper or leaves. Fruit and vegetable scraps can then be added as food for the worms. Over time, the food will be replaced with worm droppings, a rich brown matter that is an excellent natural plant food. Vermicomposting requires less space than normal composting methods, and is therefore ideal for classrooms, apartments and high-density urban areas.



BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

By composting, you are not only creating something that helps keep plants healthy, but you are keeping compostable waste products like food scraps and yard waste out of landfills.