



How To Get Started Composting

1. Assemble your raw materials.
2. Shred or chop large pieces.
3. Start with a 4-6" layer of sticks which help provide ventilation from the bottom of the pile.
4. Layer raw materials, alternating between "browns" and "greens", leaving small air pockets as you go.
5. Add a 1/8" layer of soil or mature compost and some water to each layer as you build the pile to a size 3-5' tall and 3-5' wide.

Raw Materials

Greens: Source of Nitrogen

- Grass clippings
- Kitchen scraps
- Weeds without seeds
- Prunings
- Animal manures (horse, cow, chicken, but no dog or cat)
- Garden waste
- Coffee grounds

Browns: Source of Carbon

- Sticks (use as first layer)
- Leaves
- Straw
- Corn stalks
- Newspaper (shredded)
- Wood chips

- Hay

Now You're Cooking

1. Pile should heat up in a few days. It will first heat up to 120 to 140 degrees.
2. Turn when pile cools down. The temperature may be monitored with a compost thermometer.
3. Turn pile frequently to allow reheating and cooling until it no longer heats up after turning.
4. Check moisture level. If too dry, add water until the consistency of a wet sponge is achieved.

Ready to Use

1. Mature, finished compost has an even brown color and crumbly texture.
2. Very few recognizable ingredients remain.
3. Finished compost has a good earthy smell.
4. Screen to remove uncomposted materials and return them to the pile.

Uses of Compost

- ***Potted plants***
 - Add $1/3$ compost by volume to potting mix
- ***Flower beds***
 - Add to planting hole for transplants or spread a 1/16" to 1/4" and cover with 2" of bark mulch
- ***Lawn establishment***
 - Add a layer of 1-2" and incorporate into the top 4-6" of soil before final grading and seeding
- ***Top dressing on lawn***
 - Broadcast 1/8-1/4" layer uniformly on grass
- ***Vegetable garden***
 - Add 2" over the entire garden annually and work into the top 6-8" or as crops are planted

- *As a mulch for trees and shrubs*
 - Spread a 1/16” to 1/4” out to the dripline and cover with 2” of bark mulch



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