

BASICS OF COMPOSTING

- ✓ Correct carbon to nitrogen ratios. Composting needs carbon for energy and growth and nitrogen for protein that build up the micro-organisms' bodies and allow reproduction.
- ✓ Oxygen. Needed by the microorganisms to breathe while breaking down the materials.
- ✓ 130-degrees Fahrenheit for 30 days. At this temperature all pathogens, weed seeds and fly larvae are destroyed; At 160-degrees or above, the essential microorganisms will die, robbing the compost of its added benefits.
- ✓ Control of moisture content. Too little moisture and composting will not occur. Too much moisture will cause the composting process to slow and creates a leachate (runoff) issue.

PLANNING FOR 50/50 MIX

My primary composting resource is:
For example: Grass Clippings

How much? *I mow my 3,000 sq. ft. yard once a week for 26 weeks. Each mowing produces an average of 20 mower bags of grass each time, or 520 mower bags per summer.*

This source is: Carbon or **Nitrogen**

Plan to add equal amount of the opposite source (carbon or nitrogen) through the year.

DO NOT COMPOST MEAT PRODUCTS

Carbon Source	Nitrogen Source
Leaves	Fruit scraps
Brush & prunings (slow to break down, chop if possible)	Vegetable scraps
Straw or Hay	Grass clippings (add in thin layers so does not clump)
Paper, newspaper, cardboard (avoid glossy or colored paper, and shred)	Weeds (only if reaching temperature)
Wood chips, sawdust (add in layers, slower to break down)	Manure (chicken manure is excellent 'activator')
Dryer lint	Coffee Grounds

Neutral

Egg Shells (crush)

MIXING OUR RECIPE

1. Create a base of 3" - 4" or woody, brushy material to promote aeration (do not mix into pile).
2. Alternate layers of green and brown materials; keep the layers 2" - 4" deep. Mix bin contents often (minimum every two weeks). Pile will shrink, add until bin almost full.
3. Watch temperature. Stir when gets too cool, or add nitrogen source material.

MOISTURE

Moisture content of bin should be like a wrung out dish rag.
Only add water if pile is very dry after mixing.

TIPS

- Chop up larger materials for faster decomposition.
- Whenever you add a food scrap layer, make sure you sprinkle it with soil and cap off with a brown layer to prevent smells and flies.
- Place carpet on surface of pile to help retain heat and moisture.

Compost is generally ready to use when it looks and smells like dirt;
However, aging the compost for another 1 to 2 months is recommended
to allow our critters to rest and cool down.

BY CURRENT MUNICIPAL CODE:

- Composting must be done in a 'structure' designed for the purpose
- Compost must be covered (lid or tarp does not matter)
- Do not place in drainage path
- If compost contains manure, must be at least 100-feet from wells