



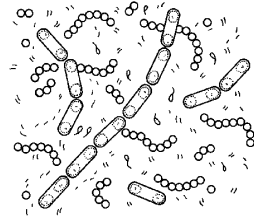
Compost Basics

Speed Up Nature—Compost!

Your compost pile is a living system. And microbes are the work horses of your pile. Keep the bacteria and fungi happy and they will work to make compost faster for you. It's all about managing your pile.

What to microbes need? Same as us.

- Food Carbon + Nitrogen
- Water Damp as a wrung out sponge
- Oxygen Turn the pile regularly to fluff up air channels
- Temperature Best above 50 degrees outside



What do you need to compost?

1. Buy or make a bin—commercial or home built
2. Feed the microbes:
2 handfuls of brown or carbon + **1 handful of green or nitrogen**
 (dried plant material, shredded paper, etc) (green plant material, food scraps or other nitrogen)
3. Layer 2ft browns then 1 ft greens. Top layer is ALWAYS brown to manage odors & hold in moisture.
4. Water as build pile
5. Turn once every week or two to add oxygen
6. Cure 4 weeks, once appears like dark & crumbly , to mature the compost



Hot Pile: Build all at once as a batch. Microbes multiply; Pile heats up to 132-140 degrees F. Turn weekly so each part of pile gets hot & kills weed seeds and most diseases.

Cool Pile: Build as you get materials. Top layer ALWAYS browns. Turn when you can. Don't add weed seeds or diseased plants.

Stock pile some fall leaves so they are available in summer to combine with nitrogen in summer when carbon sources are harder to find.

Place bin near house, garden and within hose reach. Sun or shade OK.

How soon can I get finished compost?

Fast, hot method: 2-6 months if keep microbes happy.

Slow, cool method: 1-2 years

Finished compost is:

- dark brown, crumbly & don't recognize leaves, grass, food scraps
- smells earthy like a greenhouse
- doesn't reheat

Compost Uses

- Add to Soil** dig into top 4-6 inches of soil
- Use as Mulch** 2-3 inches to top of soil around flowers, vegetables, trees & shrubs
- Mix in potting soil** see recipes on back page
- Lawn Top Dressing** screen with 1/2 " hardware cloth attached to wooden frame
- Compost Tea** soak bag of compost in water & add oxygen with a fish aerator to increase microbial populations. Spray on lawns, garden & houseplants.













Benefits

Improves soil & plant health
 Reduces water needs
 Saves \$

Reduces Fertilizer and Pesticide Needs
 Slows Erosion

 = Green or Nitrogen	YES—Compost These	 = Brown or Carbon
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- grass clippings
- leaves
- weeds / garden debris
- small brush, twigs
- wood ash (*small amounts*)
- sawdust / wood chips (*small amounts*)
- egg shells
- coffee grounds
- hay
- manure from herbivores (plant eaters)
- paper, cardboard
- fur, hair, natural fibers & feathers
- food scraps - only if buried in pile

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 potash

 calcium







Nos

- meat, bones, fat
- dairy products
- oils - cooking & salad
- whole branches, logs
- pet or human waste
- charcoal briquette ash
- sawdust from treated wood
- diseased plants (unless hot composted)
- persistent weeds (quack grass)
- thorny branches



Troubleshooting

Too Dry	Crackles to touch	Add water. Keep pile damp as wrung out sponge
Too Wet	Soggy; may smell (gone anaerobic)	Turn to add oxygen. Hold off watering till pile dries out some
All Green	Pile mats, smells bad	Turn pile & add brown
Meat, fat, salad oils	Pile mats, smells, attracts varmints	Remove meat, fat of materials with oil

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|-------------------|---|
| Recipe #1: | 2 parts garden loam + 1 part fine, sharp sand +
1 part finished mature compost |
| Recipe #2: | 2 parts soil-less mix + 1 part finished, mature compost |
| Recipe #3 | 1 part peat +1 part perlite +1 part compost |