



Compost: Does a Garden Good

Organics like table scraps and yard waste represent over one-third of all waste sent to landfills. So composting saves precious space, reduces greenhouse gases and creates soil-enriching nutrients for your garden. (In a landfill, organics are compacted and covered, so they decompose without oxygen, which releases methane. In a compost bin, organics are aerated by oxygen, releasing only carbon dioxide, which is 20 times less potent than methane.)



Ready to Rot

Once you have a composter you can begin. Just follow these simple steps:

Step 1: Choose a sunny area with good drainage for your composter. Make sure the location is accessible year round.

Step 2: Turn the soil in the location where the compost is to be placed.

Step 3: Once the base and unit are situated, place a layer of small branches in the bottom of your composter. This will let air enter the compost pile and allow for good drainage.

Step 4: Place kitchen scraps (greens) and dried excess yard material (browns) in alternating six-inch layers.

Step 5: Place a layer of finished compost or garden soil on top of the compost pile. This will introduce microorganisms needed for decomposition and help to reduce odour.

Step 6: Remember to turn the pile frequently to aerate your compost.

The compost pile requires:

- ✂ Organic material (such as fruit/vegetable peelings and leaves)
- ✂ Moisture
- ✂ Air
- ✂ Heat

Will It Smell?

Compost has a pleasant aroma. Foul odours only occur when there is a lack of oxygen, too much wet green material or too little brown material. Turning the pile can minimize odours.

Can I Compost in the Winter?

Yes. The compost process generates heat. The process is not destroyed by cold weather; it just slows down. Materials can continue to be added to your composter throughout the winter, even if the pile freezes. After spring thaw, the decomposition process will speed up again.

What Can I Compost?

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- Vegetable and fruit peelings
 - Dry leaves & grass clippings
 - Coffee grounds & filters; tea bags/leaves
 - Wood ashes
 - Weeds, before they seed
 - Spent plants and flowers
 - Straw, hay, corn cobs
 - Crushed egg shells
 - Bread, pasta, rice (no oil/sauce)
 - Woodchips and sawdust
 - Hair and Dryer lint

What Not to Compost

- Grass/tree clippings treated with chemicals
- Rhubarb leaves and other toxic plants
- Plants infected with disease
- Walnut shells, walnut leaves
- Charcoal/coal ashes
- Dog or cat droppings
- Litter box material
- Meat and bones
- Plastics and metals
- Dairy products
- Fats and oils



Will Compost Attract Animals?

Materials such as meat, bones, eggs, cheese, fats and oils are not recommended for backyard composting because they attract animals.

To reduce the risk:

Use a composter with a cover; secure with hinges or weigh down the lid.

You can also utilize a base made of wire mesh to prevent animals from digging under the pile, while still allowing water to drain.

When adding food waste, dig it in immediately and cover with soil.

Where Can I Purchase Composters?

Composters are available for purchase at the Northumberland County Headquarters Building, the Material Recovery Facility in Grafton, the Brighton and Seymour Landfills, and the Bewdley Transfer Station.



Northumberland
County's
Guide to Composting



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