

Troubleshooting Your Pile

There are several problems that you may encounter with your compost pile and these are simple steps to fix them:

- **Too wet**-turn and add dry materials
- **Too dry**-turn , add water and mix
- **Too warm**-turn and add green materials
- **Too cold**-add grass clippings, table scraps or small amount of organic fertilizer
- **Strong odour**-turn and add brown materials
- **Pest problem**-make sure there are no “keep out” items, keep pile covered, well aerated, and turn pile periodically



Did you know...

- About two-thirds of our trash is biodegradable and could be composted
- Food and paper are biodegradable in nature but not in landfills, due to lack of OXYGEN being buried deep and saturated with water.
- Every year we dispose of 24 million tons of leaves and grass clippings, which could be composted to conserve landfill space
- Canadians throw out at least 7-14 million tons of food.
- The amount of food we throw away is a major contributor to the production of greenhouse gasses, cutting down on food waste could slow global warming!!



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Your Guide to Backyard Composting



What is backyard composting?

Backyard composting is a natural break-down of organic material through the use of micro-organisms (bacteria & fungi). In order for these micro-organisms to survive they need sufficient amounts of oxygen and food. This food comes from our organic matter which provides them with protein and energy.

Why should you compost?

Reduces the waste going to the landfill– 30% of the waste that we produce on a daily basis is organic matter

Reduces pollution– When these organics break down without sufficient oxygen, they produce toxic leachate

Lowers waste collection & disposal costs

Limits the greenhouse gases– When put in a landfill, organic matter breaks down releasing methane gas

Creates a healthy and beautiful lawn or garden– using the finished compost is a good fertilizer and using it also reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.



Composting is easy...

Step 1: Pick your composting bin

Get the appropriate sized bin depending on the amount of organic materials you produce. The volume of the bin should be at least 3'x3'x3' and no more than 5'x5'x5'.

Step 2: Choose your location (Inside & out)

Inside you want a container to store your daily waste until it goes outside, and outside you want your bin to be located in a sunny area that has good drainage. In that area make sure you turn the soil before putting the bin down. After the bin has been placed on top of the turned soil, put a small layer of twigs on the floor of your compost bin.

Step 3: Collect your organic waste

PUT IN:

Fruits & veggies(green)
Coffee grounds & filters(green)
Tea leaves & bags(green)
Rice, oats & other grains(brown)
Corn stalks(brown)
Pasta(brown)
Peanut Shells(brown)
Bread & other baked goods(brown)
Egg Shells(Neutral)
Paper , Egg cartons & boxboard (neutral)
Fresh & Dried grass clippings (green)
Dry Leaves(brown)
twigs, small branches & sawdust(brown)
Non-diseased plants(brown)

KEEP OUT:

All meats(including chicken)
Fish & Shellfish
Bones
Fat, grease & oils
All dairy products
Weeds that have gone to seed
Diseased plants
Dog & cat waste
Plants previously sprayed with non-degradable pesticides

Step 4: Increasing your surface area

To increase your surface area you should cut up the materials into small pieces. This helps speed up the composting process.

Step 5: Adding your materials

Layer the brown and green materials of approximately the same height. Start with a layer of browns, then add a layer of greens, and finish by covering with a layer of browns.

Step 6: Adding moisture

Sprinkle your pile with water. Be sure throughout the season to check your pile for moisture. When you touch it, it should feel damp but when squeezing it, no water should drip. *Remember that green materials are already high in moisture.*

Step 7: Turning your pile

Turning your pile adds oxygen for the micro-organisms. To do so, move your pile from the middle of your bin to the outer edges which mixes all the materials together.

Step 8: Maintaining your pile

Collect your kitchen and yard waste throughout the year to add to your pile. Remember that you should always cover with a layer of brown materials. Keep a bag of leaves accessible all year round to do this. Make sure that there is enough moisture and that you turn your pile periodically.

Step 9: Determining if it's ready

To test if your compost is ready to use, put a small sample into a sealable plastic bag for 24-48 hours. When you open the bag there should be no odour; this means that your compost is ready to use. *Remember that before testing, no original ingredients should be visible.*

Step 10: Using your finished product

To use your compost, mix with small amounts of soil to make fertilizer for indoor and outdoor plants. Compost will make your plants and grass healthier. This is where you can use your compost:

Flowerbeds
Borders for your garden
Mulch
Around trees & on lawn
Replenishing potted plants
Vegetable garden

