

## RESOURCES

### BROCHURES

- *Composting Fruit and Vegetable Trimmings*
- *Compost Bins – Sources and Designs*

### BOOKS

*Backyard Composting*, 1992. Harmonious Technologies, Harmonious Press, Ojai, CA, 96 pp.

*Let It Rot!*, 1975. Stu Campbell, Garden Way Publishing, Pownal, VT, 144 pp.

*Rodale Book of Composting*, 1992. G. Gershuny, Saint Martin's Press, New York, NY, 278 pp.

*Worms Eat My Garbage*, 1982. Mary Appelhof, Flower Press, Kalamazoo, MI, 100 pp.

# BASIC COMPOSTING

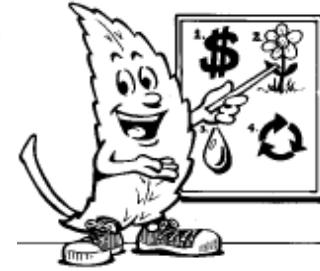


**T**URN YOUR GARBAGE INTO GOLD! IT'S EASY, IT'S SMART, IT'S RECYCLING.

Your Program,  
Company Name  
and  
Logo Here

## WHY COMPOST?

Composting is nature's way of recycling. It is a satisfying way to turn your fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings into a dark, crumbly, sweet-smelling soil conditioner.



### COMPOSTING:

- **Saves you money** by lowering garbage bills and replacing store-bought soil conditioners.
- **Helps garden and house plants** by improving the fertility and health of your soil.
- **Saves water** by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff.
- **Benefits the environment** by recycling valuable organic resources and extending the life of our landfill.

## THE 4 "R'S" OF THE YARD

**R**EDUCE the amount of yard trimmings you make by planting slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants.

**R**EUSE yard trimmings by grasscycling (mowing more often, and leaving the clippings on the lawn) and by mulching fallen leaves and chipped prunings (spread them 6" deep on paths and around trees and shrubs).

**R**ECYCLE remaining yard trimmings by composting. This brochure shows you how.

**R**ESTORE the environment with thriving gardens. It all starts at home!



## COMPOST WORKS FOR YOU

Not only does composting help the environment, but it can help your garden, yard, and house plants too! When compost looks like soil and smells sweet and earthy, it is ready to use. Here are some of the most common ways to use compost:

### IN THE GARDEN

Before planting, mix a 4" to 8" layer of compost into newly reclaimed or poor soils. Mix a 1/2" to 3" layer of compost into annual garden beds at least once a year. Compost will add nutrients and beneficial microbes, hold water, and improve plant growth.



### AROUND THE YARD

Spread a 1" to 6" layer of coarse compost on soil as a mulch, or spread a 1/2" layer of sifted, weed-seed-free compost on turfgrass as a top dressing. These can be done any time of year to improve soil fertility and reduce watering needs.



### ON HOUSE PLANTS

Sprinkle a thin layer of compost over house-plant soil to provide nutrients. You can also make a great potting soil by mixing one part compost with two parts sand and/or soil.



### DON'T HAVE A GARDEN?

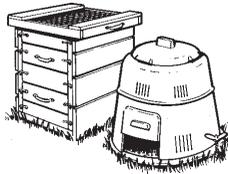
You can still make compost and use it on a house plant, give it to a friend, sprinkle it around a street tree, or use it in a community garden.

## CHOOSE A SYSTEM

### SYSTEMS FOR FOOD AND YARD TRIMMINGS

#### RODENT-RESISTANT BINS

- For fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings (using "Mixed" compost recipe)
- For yard trimmings alone (using "No-Fuss" recipe)
- Bins require a lid, floor and no holes bigger than 1/4"



#### OPEN PILES & SIMPLE BINS

- For yard trimmings ONLY
- Requires "Active" composting (chopping and weekly turning to keep animals out)
- Usually inexpensive or free



#### SYSTEMS FOR JUST FOOD TRIMMINGS

For more information about the following, see the *Composting Fruit & Vegetable Trimmings* brochure.

#### Worm Bins

- Most fun! Takes some time and effort
- For indoors or outdoors
- Produces excellent fertilizer



#### Closed-Air Systems

- Low maintenance
- Prone to odor & insect problems



#### Underground Composting

- Requires digging a hole each time you add new materials
- No harvesting necessary



**REMEMBER . . .** Whenever you compost fruit and vegetable trimmings, the Health Department requires a rodent-resistant system. Use a container with a lid, a floor, and no holes bigger than 1/4 inch, or bury food scraps at least one foot under the soil surface. For more information about bins, see the *Compost Bins – Sources and Designs* brochure.

## FOLLOW THE BASICS

Thanks to friendly bugs and worms, composting is as easy as "1-2-3" - no matter which recipe you use!

- 1 CHOP** materials if you want them to break down more quickly.
- 2 MIX** "browns" (dry, woody materials) with "greens" (moist, green materials).
- 3 MAINTAIN** air and water balance by keeping compost as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

**Browns, Greens, Air and Water** are the "big four" that will keep every compost pile happy.

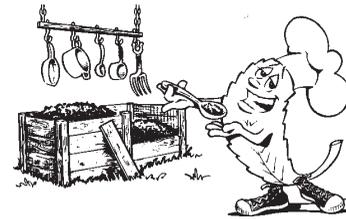
#### DO COMPOST:

- browns**
- Most sawdusts
  - Chopped, woody prunings
  - Pine needles
  - Fallen leaves
- greens**
- Tea bags
  - Citrus rinds
  - Coffee grounds & filters
  - Lawn clippings & young weeds
  - Fruit & vegetable trimmings
  - Herbivore manures

#### DON'T COMPOST:

- Meat, bones or fish
- Dairy products or grease
- Grains, beans or breads
- Dog, cat or bird feces
- Sawdust from plywood/treated wood
- Diseased plants (in cold piles)
- Fruit & vegetable trimmings (in open piles/simple bins)

**HOT COMPOST HAPPENS** when you follow the basic "1-2-3" carefully, *and* the pile is about a cubic yard (3'x3'x3'). Heat can accelerate composting and kill weed seeds and plant diseases, *but is not necessary*. Cold, slow piles are just as good. If your pile is large enough, moist, and well chopped, but not heating up, you can turn it and mix in some greens like grass clippings or an organic nitrogen fertilizer. For faster hot composting and better weed-seed kill, turn or mix your hot pile about once a week.



### RECIPES FOR RODENT-RESISTANT BINS

#### "NO-FUSS" COMPOST

For **yard trimmings** ONLY. Requires a rodent-resistant bin to prevent animal nesting.

#### ingredients:

Yard trimmings only (browns & greens), water as needed.

#### directions:

**Feed** chipped or unchopped yard trimmings into bin as you generate them.

**Maintain** compost by keeping it as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

**Harvest** rich, brown, finished compost from the bottom and center of the pile after 12 to 18 months.



#### "mixed" COMPOST

For **fruit, vegetable & yard trimmings** together. This recipe requires a rodent-resistant bin and active maintenance to prevent animal nesting and feeding.

#### ingredients:

Fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings (browns & greens), water as needed

#### directions:

**Feed** yard trimmings to your pile as you generate them by chopping them first into pieces 6" or smaller. Food scraps need to be buried and mixed into the center of the pile. Never dump and run! Be sure to mix in enough browns to balance your greens. Feed as often as you like.

**Maintain** compost by turning or mixing it about once a week. Keep it as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

**Harvest** rich, brown, finished compost by sifting out coarse, unfinished materials after 3 to 8 months.



### a recipe for open rules

#### "active" COMPOST

For **yard trimmings** ONLY. In open piles & simple bins, active maintenance prevents animal nesting.

#### ingredients:

Yard trimmings only (browns & greens), water as needed

#### directions:

**Feed** yard trimmings to your compost by chopping them first into pieces 6" or smaller, then mixing them into the pile. Feed as often as you like. Be sure to balance browns with greens.

**Maintain** pile by turning or mixing it about once a week. Keep it as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Covering it with plastic tarp will help keep it moist.

**Harvest** rich, brown, finished compost by sifting out coarse, unfinished materials after 3 to 8 months.



## troubleshooting

symptoms	problems	Solutions
Pile not composting	Too dry	Add water until slightly damp & turn (mix)
	Too much brown matter	Add fresh green matter or organic nitrogen fertilizer & turn
Pile smells rotten/attracts flies	Too wet/too many food scraps or lawn clippings	Turn & add browns (dry, woody materials) or dry soil
	Food scraps exposed	Bury & mix food scraps into pile
	Non-compostables	Remove meat, dairy, grease, etc. & turn
Rodents in pile	Food scraps in open bin/ holes larger than 1/4 inch/non-compostables	Use traps or baits, rodent-proof bin, remove meat, grease, etc. & turn