



## BACKYARD COMPOSTING IS EASY!

Composting is nature's own recycling system. Leaves, grass, and other organic matter that fall to the ground provide a home and food supply for nature's recycler's--bacteria, worms, and other microorganisms. These organisms feed on the plant material, breaking them down, and turning them into a dark, nutrient rich product called **COMPOST**. Compost improves plant nutrition, holds moisture in sandy soil, improves compacted soil, and extends the life of our landfills.

### COMPOST GUIDELINES

- Compost piles must be contained in an enclosed bin. Please avoid using wood structures. Wood is an attractive home for rodents. Sources for compost bins:
  - Recycle Utah
  - [www.composters.com](http://www.composters.com) - Over 100 different types of bins at various prices
  - Most lawn and garden centers
- Follow the guidelines below on how to build and maintain your pile will help to avoid odor and pest/rodent nuisances.



## MATERIALS TO COMPOST:

Organic food waste, tree leaves, sod, grass clippings, hay, straw, weeds, chopped corn stalk or cobs, sawdust, shredded newspaper, wood ashes, hedge clippings, and many kinds of plant refuse from the garden.

## DO NOT ADD TO COMPOST:

Meat, dairy, oils, fats, bread, diseased plants, weeds gone to seed, or charcoal ashes or briquettes.

## HOW IS IT DONE?

### Recipe to Build a Pile:

+50% Brown Materials (leaves, hay or straw, dead plants; carbon source)  
+25% Green materials (grass clippings, organic food waste)  
+25% Soil or compost (soil contains microorganism that help to break down materials)  
= 100% of a compost pile



1. Start with a layer of brush or branches
2. Add layers of leaves, grass clippings, and soil, then repeat
3. As you build the pile, dampen layers with water. Keep the pile as damp as a wrung out sponge.
4. Turn pile from time to time. Could be once a week, or once a month depending on how much you want to do it.

### Turning your Pile

One of the keys to a successful compost pile to turn the pile from time to time. This speeds up decomposition and can help to alleviate some odors.

Turning everyday could be detrimental, causing all the heat in the center of the pile to escape. Instead, try turning once week and see how that works.

### Using the Finished Product

Finished compost can be used in the following ways:

- Add to your garden in the spring or fall. Turn the garden soil and apply a 1-3 inch layer of compost.
- Compost can be mixed with either garden soil or potting soil in a 50-50 ratio to use for container gardening. The compost adds nutrients and texture to encourage plant growth.
- Compost can also be used as a mulch. Spread compost around any garden plants, under bushes, and around trees. For young plants, a 2-3 inch layer of compost often works well. Mulching helps hold in moisture, reduces weeds, and gradually feeds organic matter to the soil and plant roots. Compost is especially useful as mulch in the hottest, driest periods of the summer.

