

# Quick and Easy Tips for Backyard COMPOSTING

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## Why Compost?

- Composting is environmentally friendly. Anything you compost instead of throwing into the garbage saves valuable space in landfills, uses less gas to get it there, and offers a natural alternative to chemical fertilizer.
- **It's easy to do!**
- **Composting is inexpensive, or FREE, if you choose not to purchase a compost bin. And you can save money otherwise spent on bagged compost purchased at the store.**
- **You create dark, nutrient-rich, organic fertilizer that you can use in your garden and landscaping, and you don't have to drive to the store to get it!**

## Getting Started

Save kitchen scraps, yard waste, paper products, or any other compostable materials you would like to add to your compost.

Common Compostable Materials:

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds
- Tea leaves
- Newspaper (shredded)
- Paper (shredded)
- Saw dust
- Wood chips
- Yard waste, including: Grass clippings, branches, weeds (before they have gone to seed), and leaves
- Straw
- Chicken manure

Materials that should NOT be used for Compost:

- Meat
- Bones
- Fish scraps
- Diseased plants
- Perennial weeds
- Pet waste

## Choose a Spot for Your Compost

- Choose a spot in your yard that is easily accessible, but not too close to gathering areas. While compost piles are usually not as smelly as your garbage, it may emit a heavy organic smell at times.
- Start your compost pile on bare ground. This allows beneficial organisms such as worms to aid in the composting process.
- You may choose to purchase or build an enclosed compost bin. This isn't necessary, but it has some advantages, such as keeping pets and wildlife out, and keeping your compost contained. Many styles are available for purchase, or you can build your own by drilling holes (for aeration) in a garbage can, or a similar large container, and providing a method for turning the compost.

Compost bins are available from the Carver County Environmental Center. For more information, call: 952-361-1800.

- If you do not choose to compost in an enclosed bin, you may want to enclose your compost pile with fencing to deter pets and wildlife that your compost may attract.

## Layer, Turn & Cover

The following steps aren't necessary, but they may help to speed up the composting process.

- Lay branches, twigs, or hay first. This allows for better drainage and aeration.
- Alternate wet and dry materials. You may also choose to alternate 'green' and 'brown' materials. The theory behind this practice is that brown materials usually contain carbon, and green materials are usually higher in nitrogen. Balancing the two elements speeds up the composting process.
- If you do not have your compost in an enclosed bin, cover with plastic sheeting or similar material to trap in heat and moisture.
- Turn your compost every 2-3 weeks. If you choose to use the 'No-Turn' method, take finished compost from the bottom of the pile, and add new materials to the top of the pile.