

Why Compost?

Reduces Global Warming / Air Pollution

Transporting all your heavy food waste to a distant landfill requires the use of vehicles that burn large amounts of petroleum fuel. Backyard composting creates no pollution!

Saves Money

Getting rid of your trash costs money. Instead of paying to send your food waste to the landfill, why not keep it at home and turn it into useful compost? Once you start composting, you'll see your food waste as a valuable resource, and wonder why you ever threw it away!

Saves Landfill Space

Backyard composting can divert up to 30 percent of residential garbage from landfills. Just three households that compost at home can divert almost one ton per year!

Improve Soil Health

The use of compost improves most soils, adding both organic matter and beneficial organisms. Compost helps absorb and retain moisture; reducing runoff, erosion, and irrigation needs. It supplies nutrients slowly, and reduces the need for fertilizer application. Plants grow healthier with compost. Roots develop better. It also builds a greater resistance to diseases and predators, so that fewer pesticides are required.

Compost Happens

For
more
information,



contact the
**Addison County Solid Waste
Management District**

Telephone: 802-388-2333
Fax: 802-388-0271
Website:
www.AddisonCountyRecycles.org

Visit: 1223 Route 7 South
Middlebury, VT 05753



**ADDISON COUNTY
SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

Compost at Home



Simple
Steps



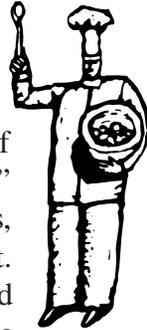
**ADDISON COUNTY
SOLID WASTE
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

Compost Ingredients

Shopping List

Carbon

Your compost needs good sources of carbon, otherwise known as “browns.” Some great carbon sources are dried leaves, wood chips, dried hay, straw, or sawdust. Rake up a big pile of leaves in the fall and keep them close to your compost pile as a carbon feedstock. For easier incorporation, try shredding the leaves with a weedwacker or mower first.



Nitrogen

Nitrogen is the ingredient that kick-starts your compost pile. Add “greens” such as any vegetable scraps from your kitchen, garden trimmings, green leaves, freshly cut grass, and manure from chickens, horses, cows, pigs, sheep, or goats. A few other items are fine for your compost pile and do nothing for your trash: tea bags, coffee grounds (and filters), egg shells, and breads.

Keep Out!

Not all food wastes should go into your compost. Certain foods can attract unwelcome animals, rodents, or other pests. They can also contain harmful pathogens or disease organisms. Keep the following out of your pile: dairy products, fish, meat, bones, oils, grease, and pet feces. Also keep out charcoal ash, poison ivy, poison oak, black walnut leaves, and dryer lint (usually contains plastic fibers).

Locate and Build Your Pile

Select an Area

Build your pile on a level, well-drained area. Most importantly, be sure to allow yourself easy access to the pile. Either a sunny or shady area is fine, since the heat associated with compost piles is generated by the microbes within the pile itself. Don't locate the bin right near your garden, since it may attract slugs and other bugs that gardeners consider pests.

Pile Shape: Choose a System

You can compost using a number of different systems, but they all produce similar results. A compost bin helps to keep in some of the heat and moisture, but the type of bin you select isn't as important as how you build the pile. As long as the pile is roughly 3 ft x 3 ft x 3 ft, it should function well.

Add Stuff

Try to add material in layers. Each time you add some nitrogen-rich material, cover it with a layer of carbon-rich material. You should try to have about a 50% ratio by weight of nitrogen materials to carbon materials. Remember that the “greens” are typically heavy, so add plenty of dry leaves or straw to balance the pile. A pile with too much carbon will not heat up. A pile with too much nitrogen will become anerobic and smelly unless turned very frequently.



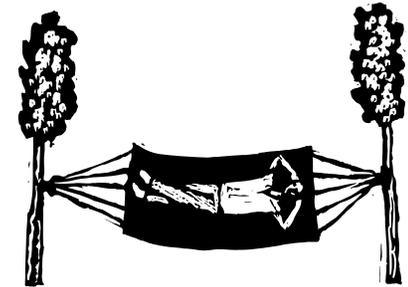
Pile Management

Compost Rule #1: You Can't Stop It!

The first rule of composting is that it will happen no matter what you do. You really can't go wrong! Composting is simply speeding up a process of nutrient cycling that has always occurred in nature.

Turn, Turn, Turn

Turning the pile will aerate it and allow it to break down more evenly. The more frequently you turn the pile, the faster the process will happen. Turn it once every few weeks if you are looking for compost in the same year. Or, be a “lazy composter” and don't turn it at all! Your pile will still break down, it will just take longer.



Water

The ideal pile should have the moisture content of a wrung-out sponge. If it seems dry and not much is happening, try adding more nitrogen-rich material, which contains lots of water. Or you can try adding water in modest amounts. Remember that a pile with well balanced ingredients (see panel to the left) usually doesn't require the addition of anything else.

Now Wait

That's all there is to it! When it's ready, screen out the bigger chunks, rake the compost into your lawn or garden, and watch the magic!