

Composting Basics





Compost is partially decomposed organic matter that is created by soil microorganisms breaking down plant tissue through biological processes. As organic matter is broken down, nutrients can be released into the soil that can be taken up by plants.

How to Compost

1. There are 'green' materials containing more nitrogen and 'brown' materials containing more carbon.
2. Materials should be added in a C: N ratio of 30:1 (*a lot more brown materials than green*)
3. Materials should be kept moist like a damp sponge and turned as often as possible (once a week is ideal), decomposition slows if not turned often.

How to Apply

Compost can be applied in the spring or fall to the top of the soil. In order to get nutrients to the root zone, it will need to be turned into the soil.

Brown Materials (C)		Green Materials (N)	
	Dried leaves		Green plants
	Twigs and branches		Weeds (without seeds)
	Pine needles		Grass clippings
	Cornstalks		Flowers
	Straw, hay, animal bedding		Fruit & vegetable scraps 
	Sawdust		Coffee grounds, tea
	Paper, newspaper		Hair
	Dryer lint		Cooked foods (avoid fats and animal products)

Materials to avoid: animal products, fats, large twigs and branches, plants that have been treated with herbicides, manures from carnivorous animals (cats and dogs), diseased plants, perennial weeds that can root, and weeds with seeds.

