

Using finished compost

Compost is ready to use when it is dark and crumbly with most of the original identity of the materials lost. You can screen the finished compost to remove coarse or incompletely decomposed materials. Return these to the compost pile.



"Lazy compost"

Simply pile up organic matter in a remote area of your garden. You will get compost "some time"

Questions & answers

How long will it take?

Anywhere from two months to two years! It all depends on the efforts you put into it. You can accelerate the process by keeping ideal conditions: humidity, aeration, shredding and a good balance of "greens" and "browns".

Can I compost in winter?

Yes! Continue to add materials throughout the winter to your compost box. The decomposition process will stop, but the pile will become active again in spring. Turn it over to help the process.

Will it smell?

A balanced compost pile that is well aerated should not have an unpleasant odor. If it does, it may be that you added too much green materials or that the pile is too wet or compacted. Turn the pile, let it dry out or add "brown" materials such as leaves.

What is worm composting?

Worm composting is a method that uses red worms to eat your kitchen scraps. It can be done year-round and inside the house. If you are tired of making trips to the backyard in the snow, this is a method to consider. Red wigglers are nice for fishing too!

Environment Committee

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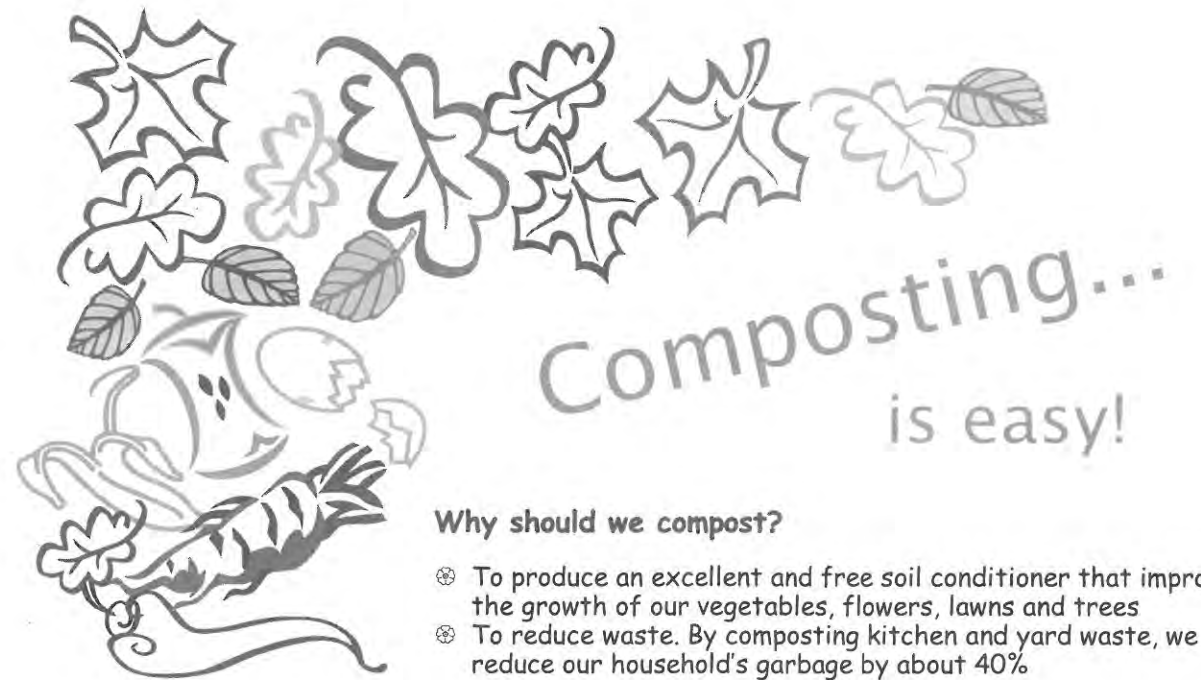
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Municipality of Low

This flyer was originally produced by the municipality of Potton.



Why should we compost?

- ⊗ To produce an excellent and free soil conditioner that improves the growth of our vegetables, flowers, lawns and trees
- ⊗ To reduce waste. By composting kitchen and yard waste, we can reduce our household's garbage by about 40%

What is compost?

Compost is a dark earthy material that is the result of the controlled decomposition of organic matter by billions of microorganisms

What can we compost?

Do add:

Nitrogen rich "green" materials (wet):

- ⊗ Plant remains
- ⊗ Fruit and vegetable scraps
- ⊗ Tea bags, coffee grounds
- ⊗ Egg shells
- ⊗ Cut grass (in small amounts)

Carbon rich "brown" materials (dry):

- ⊗ Dead leaves
- ⊗ Dry hay and straw
- ⊗ Shredded newspapers
- ⊗ Chipped branches
- ⊗ Sawdust (in small amounts)
- ⊗ Bread, pasta, cereals

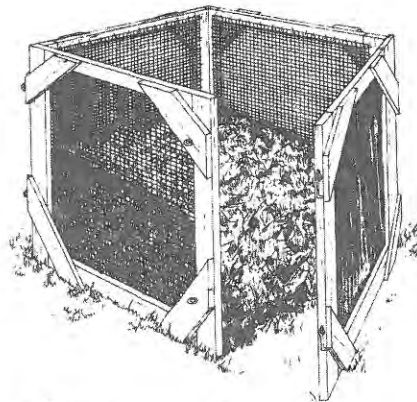
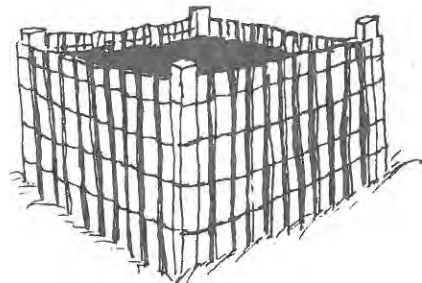
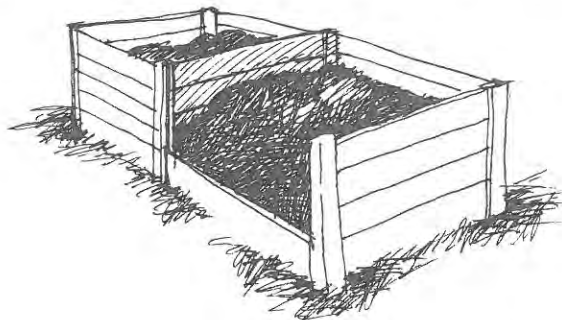
Do not add:

- × Meat, bones, fish scraps
- × Fat, oil, salad dressing, dairy products
- × Dog and cat litter
- × Diseased or infested plants
- × Weeds with mature seeds
- × Pernicious weeds such as crab grass
- × Toxic waste (pesticides, paint)
- × Ashes, charcoal



Containers

Containers are not essential but they are practical especially for kitchen waste. An open pile can be unsightly and is more likely to attract pests. There are different compost boxes to choose from. You can buy a commercial container or built one yourself. Bins with two or three sections are interesting because you can easily aerate the material by turning it from one section to another. Also, the material in a full section can finish decomposing while you are adding fresh materials to another section. Each unit should ideally measure at least 1 m³ to heat properly. The process will be slower in a smaller container.



Method

- ⊗ Place your container on a level spot on the ground, where the drainage is good
- ⊗ Add organic materials:
Add both nitrogen rich "green" materials and carbon-rich "brown" materials. For example, when you add kitchen scraps or grass, make sure to add leaves or straw as well. Collect leaf bags in the fall and keep some by your compost bin to add gradually to your pile during the rest of the year. Chop or shred materials into small pieces to accelerate the process
- ⊗ Keep the pile as moist as a wrung out sponge. Use a cover to protect the pile from heavy rainfall. If it does get too wet, turn and loosen it while introducing more dry materials such as leaves. If it is too dry, water it or take the cover off when it rains
- ⊗ Provide air to the pile by turning it with a pitchfork or a special aerating tool. You can also place an air stack in the center of the pile

Avoid attracting animals and flies

- ⊗ Use a container with a tight-fitting lid
- ⊗ When adding food waste, either dig it into the existing compost immediately or cover it well with some soil
- ⊗ Do not add meat & fish scraps or cheese
- ⊗ Line the sides and bottom completely with heavy-duty wire mesh



Tips on leaves and grass clippings

Grass clippings

Do not add too many grass clippings to your compost. They tend to mat and they are very rich in nitrogen which can become very smelly.

Instead, you can:

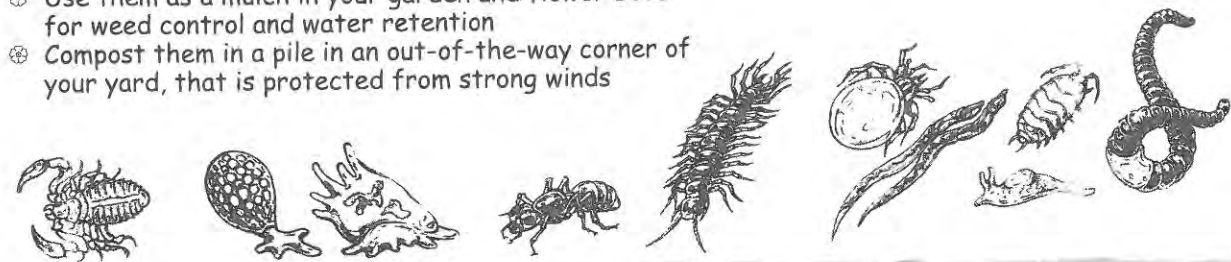
- ⊗ Leave them on the lawn to return nutrients to the soil
- ⊗ Mix them with "brown" materials such as leaves (half/half)
- ⊗ Add them in thin layers to the compost pile
- ⊗ Allow them to dry in the sun before adding them

Leaves

If you don't have too many trees you can mulch them directly on the lawn, shredding them with your lawnmower. But if you have a lot of trees you may have difficulty doing this or fitting them all into your compost bin.

But you can:

- ⊗ Shred the leaves to reduce their volume
- ⊗ Build a special bin for yard waste only
- ⊗ Keep at least 4-5 bags next to your compost bin to add to your kitchen scraps year round
- ⊗ Use them as a mulch in your garden and flower beds for weed control and water retention
- ⊗ Compost them in a pile in an out-of-the-way corner of your yard, that is protected from strong winds



How does it work?

Compost is the end product of organic matter digestion by microorganisms: bacteria, fungi, actinomycetes and invertebrates such as springtails, mites, centipedes, sow-bugs and earthworms. These little creatures need air, water and a balanced diet ("brown" and "green" stuff) to produce stable humus.

Internet sites to learn more about composting:

- <http://www.compost.org/> (Bilingual)
- <http://www.rrfb.com/pages/compost/Compost.html> (English)
- <http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0372/0003/0005-e.asp> (English)
- <http://www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=En&n=8D8E3843-1> (English)
- <http://www.novaenvirocom.ca/en/publication.html> (English)
- <http://www.compostage.info/> (French)
- <http://www.eco-quartier.ca/compostage.htm> (French)
- <http://www.ec.gc.ca/education/default.asp?lang=Fr&n=8D8E3843-1> (French)
- http://www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/environnement/matieres_residuelles/compostage_domestique.aspx (Fr)
- <http://www.actionrebut.org/projets-services/compostage/construction-de-composteurs> (French)
- <http://www.novaenvirocom.ca/publications.html> (French)
- http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/page/Environnement_Fr/media/documents/Guide_compost.pdf (French)
- <http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0372/0003/0005-f.asp> (French)

