



# COMPOSTING INFORMATION



## HOW TO USE YOUR COMPOST:

**Fertilizer:** Feed your perennials, bulbs, fruit trees, container plants, or lawn. Top dress or sprinkle some on top of your new or established plantings.

**Mulch:** Apply a 3 to 6 inch layer of compost to the soil surface instead of using mulch; it will prevent water evaporation from the soil, keeping it moist longer, and it will also discourage weed growth.

**Potting soil:** To make an enriched potting soil, use equal parts compost, [vermiculite](#), and topsoil; mix thoroughly.

## WHY COMPOST?

The practice of composting...

- Reduces food waste and saves space in landfills
- Reduces greenhouse gases

Using compost in a garden...

- Increases water retention
- Increases soil fertility
- Is cheaper and more effective than chemical fertilizers
- Causes plants to grow larger, healthier, and even tastier!

# STARTING YOUR *Compost* PILE

Start your compost pile or bin with a four-to-six inch layer of bulky browns such as twigs and wood chips. This layer will help to absorb and drain excess liquid and provide a route for oxygen to reach your pile.

## COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS

### CARBON-RICH MATERIALS (BROWNS)

Carbon-rich materials provide structure to and allow airflow, and serve as food for the microorganisms to consume.

- Straw
- Pine Needles
- Wood Chips
- Leaves
- Cardboard
- Paper/Newspaper



### THE FOUR NECESSARY INGREDIENTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE COMPOST PILE

- Carbon (Browns)
- Nitrogen (Greens)
- Oxygen
- Water

### NITROGEN-RICH MATERIALS (GREENS)

Nitrogen-rich materials provide moisture and heat to the pile, creating the ideal conditions for material to breakdown.

- Fruit/Vegetable Scraps
- Eggshells
- Coffee Grounds
- Tea Bags
- Flowers
- Lawn/Grass Clippings



# MANAGING YOUR PILE



## LAYERING

Begin your compost pile with a layer of stiff brown material (sticks work well for this) to allow airflow through the bottom of your pile, and excess moisture to seep out. Layer your pile with the ratio of 1 part green to 2 parts brown. Add all of your material in one day or week, and allow your pile to heat up before turning it.



## TURNING

Turning introduces oxygen into the system to speed decomposition. Wait about a week after layering your compost bin before you begin to turn it regularly. Turning your compost every 3-4 days promotes the fastest decomposition.

## WATERING

Watering speeds up the decomposition process. When layering, moisten the brown layers to prevent your pile from drying out. Add water to your compost pile regularly (every week or so), but be careful not to over water.

## HARVESTING YOUR COMPOST

When there are no visible food scraps, allow your pile to cure for at least four weeks. The compost will look dark, loose, and crumbly, and smell like fresh soil.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If the pile is too dry add moisture and turn. If the pile has a bad odor, add more browns/dry material and turn. If the pile is not heating up, mix in greens and turn.