



Composting

What is Composting?

Compost is a dark brown, earthy, crumbly material consisting of decomposed organic matter.

Benefits of Composted Material:

When added to soil, compost improves soil by helping with both its porosity and water retention, while providing essential nutrients plants require. Composting also diverts waste from the waste stream and our landfills!

How does Material Decompose?

Thousands of Microorganisms work to break down the material. If conditions are properly managed we can speed up the process.

What Do I Need to Make Compost?

Here's What You Need...



Other You May Want to Consider:

- Compost pile location
- How quickly you want the materials to breakdown
- How you plan to use your finished compost

Other tools you may want to help you get started:

- Compost bin
- Pitchfork (compost turner)
- Probe thermometer
- Chipper/shredder
- Wheelbarrow (for transport)

Contact The Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Sustainability Division, for More Information:

Phone: 207-592-0455 Mail: 17 SHS Augusta, ME

How Do I Start My Compost Pile?

Start by picking a location. When choosing a location look for one that is:

- Well-drained and close to level
- In partial shade, to help with water retention
- At least 1-foot away from walls, fences, bushes, trees etc.
- A convenient spot to place materials and to get the end product to its final location

Once you choose your location you will want to loosen the soil so that your compost will come into contact with the soil.



Building Your Compost Pile

Once you have loosened up the soil at your location, you may want to pile 4" to 6" layer of twigs on top of the plot to encourage airflow at the bottom of the pile.

Now Gather Your Materials and have a shovel, pitchfork, and garden-hose ready to mix materials and add moisture as you build! You should have enough material ready to build a 3 ft X 3ft X 3ft pile.

Now it's time to make a **composting-sandwich!** Starting with brown materials, alternate layers of 'greens' and 'browns,' mixing materials and adding water as you go. Be sure to bury food scraps in the center of the pile, and just like you started finish with a brown layer.



"Greens"

- Fruit & vegetable scraps
- Houseplants
- Green plant trimmings
- Weeds that have not gone to seed
- Coffee grounds & filters or tea bags
- Bread, pasta, cereal
- Hair
- Grass clippings
- Wilted flowers

"Browns"

- Dry leaves
- Hay or straw
- Wood chips
- Sawdust (use sparingly)
- Dryer lint
- Dried grass clippings
- Shredded cardboard or paper (mix it well or it will mat up)



Do Not Compost These Materials:

Meat, fish or dairy products; fats, oils, peanut butter, mayonnaise, or salad dressings; dog or cat excrement; wood or charcoal ash; grass clippings from lawns treated with long-lasting herbicides; bones; glass, plastic, metal and other non-organic materials.

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