

COMPOSTING 101

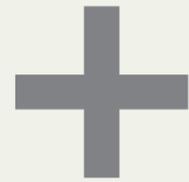
The beginner's guide to composting at home

Composting is a natural form of recycling that turns certain waste into organic material that can be used in a variety of ways. By composting, you are not only creating something that helps keep plants healthy, but you are keeping compostable waste products like food scraps and yard waste out of landfills.

WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

Brown material to produce carbon:

- Dead Leaves, Branches & Twigs
- Cotton & Wool Rags
- Sawdust & Wood Chips
- Paper Towels
- Coffee Filters
- Cardboard & Newspaper
- Tea Bags
- Uncoated Paper Plates & Cups



Green material to produce nitrogen:

- Grass Clippings & Leaves
- Coffee Grounds
- Hair & Lint
- Fruit & Vegetable Scraps
- Nuts & Nut Shells
- Breads
- Egg Shells
- Pasta, Grains & Rice
- Sweeping & Vacuum Dust



WATER



1

Select a dry, shady spot near a water source.

Ideal size for your compost area is 3 feet wide by 3 feet deep by 3 feet tall (1 cubic yard). You can buy a bin, use chicken wire, or just isolate an area of ground for your compost heap.



2

Add brown and green material in alternate layers.

Try and keep the ratio roughly 3 parts browns to 1 part greens. Make sure larger pieces of material are chopped or shredded.



3

Keep the compost moist (but not too wet).

Moisture helps with the breakdown of organic matter.

Occasionally turn your compost mixture to provide aeration.

This helps speed up the composting process and keeps things airy, which cuts the risk of things getting smelly.



4

As materials break down, the pile will get warm.

There might even be steam. Don't be alarmed. That means it's working. Now you just have to wait.



5

All done!

When material is dark with no remnants of food or waste, your compost is ready. Add it to lawns and gardens or anywhere that could benefit from some good soil.

WHAT NOT TO COMPOST:

- Metal
- Pet Waste
- Diseased or Insect-Ridden Plants
- Plastic & Foam
- Film & Containers
- Glass
- Coal & Charcoal Ash
- Dairy, Meat & Bones
- Coated Paper Plates
- Plastic Utensils

For a more in-depth compost guide, visit azdeq.gov/CompostGuide

For more ways to reuse items and reduce waste at home, visit azdeq.gov/P2House

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