

COMPOSTING

NATURE'S WAY OF RECYCLING



Learn more at: DallasRecycles.com

LET NATURE DO THE WORK FOR YOU

Compost forms when you mix together things like leaves, grass clippings, vegetable and fruit scraps.

The mixture eventually breaks down and forms humus, which you can use to enrich your soil.

Composting is a great way to recycle your kitchen scraps and yard trimmings, reduce your food waste and generate a free, rich soil conditioner.

By composting, you're helping the City of Dallas reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills, which saves natural resources and reduces greenhouse gases.

BENEFITS:

- Reduce waste
- Reduce chemical use
- Protect ground water
- Grow healthy, vibrant plants
- Save money
- Help Dallas reach its Zero Waste goal to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills by 90% by 2040.

BASIC INGREDIENTS:   **ORGANIC MATERIALS**

 **WATER**

 **AIR**

HOW DOES COMPOSTING WORK?

Add nitrogen-rich greens and carbon-rich browns to your compost bin or pile.

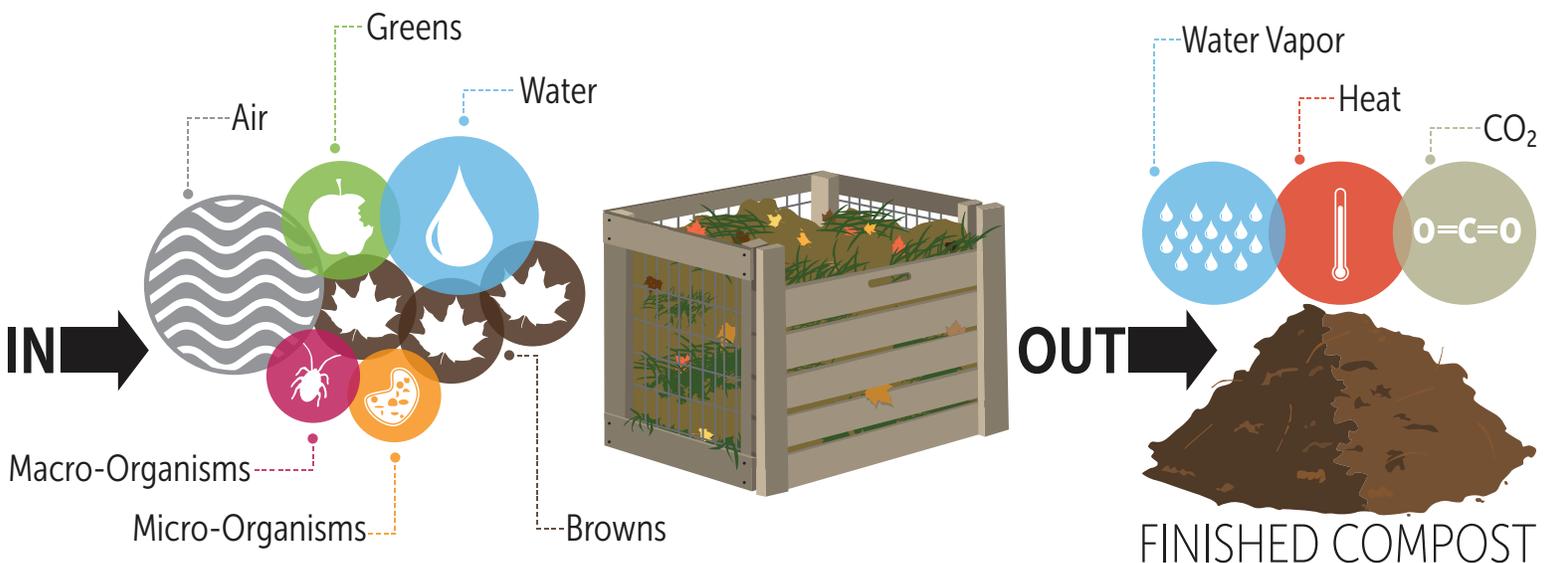
Add water and "turn" materials.

Micro-organisms that you can't see (such as bacteria and fungi) and macro-organisms you can see (such as roly pollies, earth worms, & other insects)

consume and break down material.

With enough air and water, the micro-organisms will produce heat.

Hot compost decomposes faster than cold compost. If there is not enough water and oxygen, the micro-organisms will die resulting in a slow rate of decomposition.



HOW TO GET STARTED:

First, decide if you want an open compost pile or a fabricated compost bin.

A bin or enclosed pile is typically recommended to discourage pests and make it easier to access the finished compost.

There are many commercially produced compost bins online or at hardware stores. You can also Do-It-Yourself from numerous plans available online.

The ideal bin size is 3 feet by 3 feet by 3 feet.



Figure 1

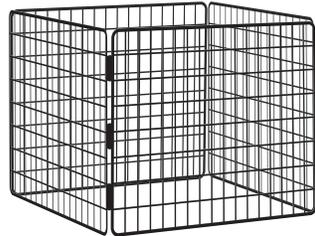


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Figure 1:
Wooden

Figure 2:
Wire Mesh

Figure 3:
Enclosed Plastic Bin

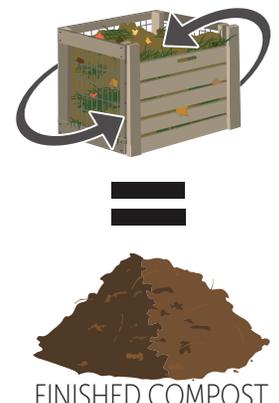
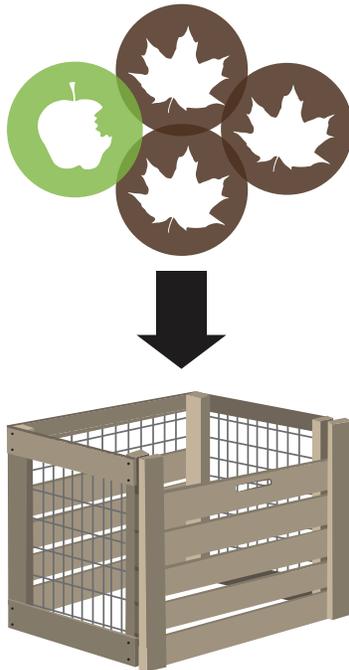
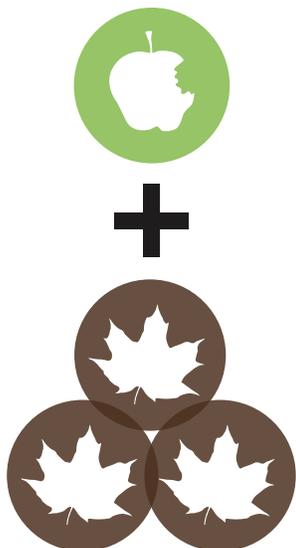
Figure 4:
Tumbler

Figure 5:
Vermicompost Bin

Figure 6:
Bokashi Composter

HOW TO MAKE COMPOST:

- Each time you add materials to your pile, add roughly one share of nitrogen-rich greens and three shares of carbon-rich browns.
- Place materials in your compost pile or compost bin.
- Add some water (e.g. by rinsing out your kitchen compost bin) and mix. Make sure your pile has enough air and water. The mixture should not be more moist than a wrung out sponge.
- Turn or mix occasionally and allow decomposition to occur for a few months. Your consistency will influence your results.



Turning	Finished Compost
once a week	3 - 4 months
bi-weekly	4 - 6 months
once a month	8 - 12 months

WHAT TO PLACE IN YOUR COMPOST BIN OR PILE

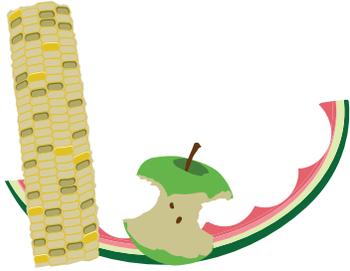
NITROGEN-RICH MATERIALS – “THE GREENS”

VEGETABLE/FRUIT PEELINGS AND SCRAPS

Apple cores, banana peels, citrus peels, pineapple skin, watermelon rinds

Onion skins, potato peelings, lettuce, cilantro, corn cobs, garlic tops, tomatoes, pickles

Spoiled vegetables and fruits (including juice), canned or from the freezer



INEDIBLE LEFTOVERS

Clean & crushed egg shells, bread crust, burned toast, oatmeal, stale bread, potato chips, cereal, cookies

Old pasta, rice and tofu, popcorn, avocados (including pits), nut and peanut shells

Spices, wine gone bad and old beer, soy and rice milk, gelatin



TEA AND COFFEE LEFTOVERS

Coffee grounds, filters, tea bags and leaves, bags and burlaps



FRESH GRASS CLIPPINGS & PLANTS

Houseplant trimmings



CARBON-RICH MATERIALS – “THE BROWNS”

DEAD OR DRIED GRASS CLIPPINGS

Fallen leaves, dead or dried flowers

Old, dried up herbs and spices



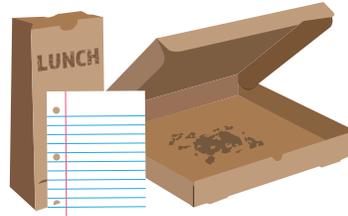
WOOD CHIPS, STRAW AND HAY

Wooden toothpicks, sawdust, pencil shavings



PAPER

Shredded paper, paper bags, newspapers, comics, tickets, cards, envelopes, receipts, paper notes, computer paper, junk mail, paperboard, cardboard (e.g. pizza box)



NATURAL FIBERS

Cotton lint from clothes dryer, dust bunnies from under the bed, wool socks, vacuum cleaner bag contents, cotton swabs, cotton balls, pet hair



REMEMBER: The smaller the pieces, the faster your compost will decompose.



WHAT NOT TO PLACE IN YOUR COMPOST BIN OR PILE

All meat, poultry and fish products or bones

Anything not biodegradable (plastic, metal, glass)

Ash from coal, wood or charcoal

Shavings or sawdust from treated wood

Dairy Products

Big or chunky wood material

Synthetic fibers

Diseased or insect-infested plants

Very greasy and oily food

Pet droppings

Waxed or glossy paper

Weeds and invasive plants

HOW TO KNOW IT'S READY

THE JAR TEST

Put some compost in a jar, add water to make it soggy, and seal the jar tightly.

Leave it alone for a week, then open the jar carefully. Check for odor. If it smells like wet earth, then the compost is done.

Finished compost is dark brown or black and crumbly with a rich, earthy smell. Using compost in the late summer or fall is ideal so that you can make room in your compost bin for fall leaves.



SOCIAL MEDIA

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Sanitation Services

TROUBLESHOOTING

Composting is not an exact science. If you combine roughly one part of nitrogen-rich greens to three parts carbon-rich browns to your compost then you will be off to a good start.

Below are some common composting problems and how to fix them.



SYMPTOM

Bad odor

Pile smells OK, but is not decomposing

Liquid is leaking out of the bottom of the bin

Compost not breaking down properly

Pests



PROBLEM

Not enough air, too little browns or too wet

Not enough water, too little greens

Too much water. Materials should be damp like a wrung-out sponge

Materials are too big

Exposed food pieces



SOLUTION

Turn/mix the compost and add more browns

Moisten pile, turn material and add more greens

Add more of the dry browns and turn/mix the compost

Cut materials into smaller pieces

Bury food under a layer of compost or leaves

MORE INFO ON COMPOSTING

Visit DallasRecycles.com for more information on the following:

- City of Dallas Composting Seminars
- Harvesting Compost
- Worm Composting (Vermicomposting)
- DIY Compost Bins