

How to Compost

What is Composting?

Composting is "the active breakdown of foods and other materials through an organic process".

It is Nature's way of recycling. In healthy soils across the world a natural process turns biodegradable material into rich degraded organic matter, also known as humus.

Facts

- Food wastage is responsible for around 6% of total global greenhouse gas emissions. This is around three times the global emissions from aviation.
- These emissions come from food that is lost in supply chains or wasted by consumers as a result of poor storage and handling techniques; lack of refrigeration; and spoilage in transport and processing. Other food is simply thrown away by retailers and consumers.
- Organic waste cannot degrade in landfills as the vital oxygen needed to facilitate the decaying process cannot reach it.
- Landfill material release greenhouse gases like methane gas that contribute to climate change. Incineration results in toxic ash waste, and the burning process releases a vast amount of carbon dioxide into our precious atmosphere.

Benefits of Composting

1. Reduces the amount of waste going to landfill which decreases methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.
2. Home composting (as opposed to buying commercial compost) reduces your dependence on fossil fuels. Commercial compost requires oil-reliant machinery and a sped-up method of oxidising organic matter at a high heat to get it to break down quickly. No fungal decomposition is involved in this process.
3. Enriches soil used in gardens, fields, and pot plants with nutrients by encouraging the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create rich humus. This results in higher yields AND healthier fruits, vegetables, and flowers.
4. The resulting nutrient rich humus helps to retain moisture and suppresses plant diseases and pests.
5. Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
6. Saves you money by reducing what you spend on compost, fertiliser and garden waste removal.



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Outdoor Composting



Equipment:

- ❖ Compost Bin (shop bought) OR
- ❖ Compost Bin (home made) - drill, plastic container with lid
- ❖ Pitchfork or garden shovel
- ❖ Water hose

1. Find or make a compost bin.

Shop bought - Different sized compost bins can be found at garden centres.

Home made - watch this simple video to make a simple outdoor compost bin [Link](#).

Please ask for help from an adult when using a drill.

2. Select a dry, shady spot outside near a water source for your compost bin.

3. Add brown (provide carbon) and green (provide nitrogen) materials, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.

Brown Materials	Green Materials	AVOID
Paper	Fruit (leftovers & peels)	Dairy (too acidic)
Cardboard	Vegetables (leftovers & peels)	Meat & fish (attract maggots)
Tissue	Tea leaves	Grains
Newspaper	Coffee grounds	Glossy paper eg. magazines
Dry brown leaves	Green leaves	
Sawdust	Grass	
Egg cartons	Eggshells	



4. Mix the compost mixture regularly with a pitchfork or garden shovel (every 2 weeks is recommended) and spray with a little bit of water to help maintain the compost.



5. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. Composting time varies but is usually ready to use within approximately 2 months.

Indoor Composting

If you do not have space for an outdoor compost pile, you can compost materials indoors using a special type of bin, which you can buy from a garden centre, online, or make yourself.

Instructions on how to make an indoor compost bin - [Link](#).

TIPS

- Remember to look after your compost and keep track of what you throw in. A properly managed compost bin will not attract pests or rodents and will not smell bad.
- In an indoor compost bin it is a good idea to avoid composting very smelly items (such as a lot of onion peelings) because you may smell it in the rest of your home.
- Keep watery items, such as melons or squashes, to a minimum to avoid making the contents of your bin too soggy.
- Keep a box of shredded paper or dry leaves close by and add a handful or two every time you add food scraps or coffee grounds to your bin. This will keep it from getting too soggy, as well as provide carbon to your bin.
- Turn the contents of your bin often: This helps the bin warm up a bit and increases microbial action. Mixing the contents is a good way to avoiding soggy and dry pockets in the bin. You can use a shovel or hand trowel to move the contents of the bin around, or, if you are using a bucket, just roll it back and forth a few times to mix it.
- Smaller items break down quicker: Chop food fairly small for the quickest results, and shred your paper or tear it into thin strips.

In time you will start to get a feel for what to add and whether your compost is healthy or not.

We hope you and whatever you plant enjoy your home made compost!



Sources of Information:

<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/lifestyle/5-reasons-why-composting-is-the-greenest-thing-you-can-do/>
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