**FOLLOW THE BASICS**

Thanks to friendly bugs and worms, composting is as easy as "1-2-3"—no matter which recipe you use!

1. **CHOP** materials so there's more surface area for microorganisms to chew on.
2. **MIX** "browns" (dry, woody materials) with "greens" (moist, green materials).
3. **MAINTAIN** air & water balance by keeping compost as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

**Browns, Greens, Air & Water** are the "big four" that will keep every compost pile happy.

**DO COMPOST:**
- Untreated sawdusts
- Chopped, woody prunings
- Straw
- Fallen leaves (minimal eucalyptus)
- Tea bags
- Citrus rinds
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Lawn clippings & young weeds
- Fruit & vegetable trimmings
- Herbivore manures, bedding

**DON'T COMPOST:**
- Meat, bones or fish
- Dairy products or grease
- Grains, beans or breads
- Dog, cat or bird faces
- Sawdust from ply-wood/treated wood
- Diseased plants (in cold piles)
- Weed seeds (in cold piles)
- Fruit & vegetable trimmings (in open piles/simple bins)

**RODENT-RESISTANT BINS**

**MAKE YOUR OWN FROM THE RECIPES BELOW**

**COLD OR PASSIVE COMPOST**
For yard trimmings ONLY. Requires a rodent-resistant bin to prevent possible animal nesting.

- **INGREDIENTS:**
  - Yard trimmings only (Browns & Greens), water as needed
- **DIRECTIONS:**
  - Feed chopped or unchopped yard trimmings into bin as you generate them. **Maintain** compost by keeping it as moist as a wrung-out sponge. **Harvest** rich, brown, finished compost from the bottom and center of the pile after 12-18 months.

**HOT OR ACTIVE COMPOST**
For fruit, vegetable & yard trimmings together. This recipe requires a rodent-resistant bin and active maintenance to prevent animal nesting and feeding.

- **INGREDIENTS:**
  - A cubic yard minimum of fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings (Browns & Greens), water as needed.
- **DIRECTIONS:**
  - Feed yard trimmings to your pile as you generate them by chopping them first into pieces 6 inches or smaller. Food scraps need to be buried and mixed into the center of the pile. Never dump and run! Be sure to mix in enough browns to balance your greens. Feed as often as you like. **Maintain** compost by turning or mixing it about once a week. Keep it moist as a wrung-out sponge. **Harvest** rich, brown, finished compost by sifting out coarse, unfinished materials after 3-9 months.

**HOT COMPOST**

Hot compost happens when you follow the basic "1-2-3" carefully, and the pile is about a cubic yard (3’x3’x3’). Create a balanced diet for the microorganisms in the pile by mixing an equal amount of brown (or carbohydrates for an energy source) and green (or nitrogen for body building). The more rapidly the beneficial microbes (mostly fungi and bacteria) digest organic materials, the warmer the pile becomes. Heat accelerates composting. When temperatures reach 130°F for three or more days, most of the pathogens and weed seeds are killed. Cold, slow composting will still result in rich compost, but may still carry active weed seeds and plant diseases. If your pile is large enough, moist enough, and well chopped, but not heating up, and you wish to turn it, you can turn it in some greens like grass clippings. For faster hot composting and better weed seed kill, turn or mix your hot pile about once a week.

**TROUBLESHOOTING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pile not composting</td>
<td>Too dry</td>
<td>Add water until slightly damp &amp; turn (mix)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pile smells rotten/rotten</td>
<td>Excess browns matter</td>
<td>Add fresh green matter or organic nitrogen fertilizer &amp; turn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pile smells rotten/rotten</td>
<td>Too many food scraps or lawn clippings</td>
<td>Turn &amp; add browns (dry, woody materials) or dry soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile smells rotten/rotten</td>
<td>Food scraps Hoganed</td>
<td>Berry &amp; mix food scraps into pile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile smells rotten/rotten</td>
<td>Non-compostables</td>
<td>Remove moist, dairy, grease, etc. &amp; turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodents in pile</td>
<td>Feed scraps in open bin</td>
<td>Use traps or bait, rodent-proof bin, remove moist, grease, etc. &amp; turn</td>
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**SYSTEMS FOR FOOD AND YARD TRIMMINGS**

**RODENT RESISTANT BINS**
- For fruit, vegetable & yard trimmings (using "Mixed" compost recipe)
- For yard trimmings alone (using "No-fuss" recipe)
- Bin requires a lid, floor, & no holes bigger than 1/4 inch

**OPEN PILES AND SIMPLE BINS**
- For yard trimmings ONLY (are not rodent resistant)
- Requires "Active" composting (chopping & weekly turning to keep animals out)
- Usually inexpensive or free

**SYSTEMS FOR JUST FOOD TRIMMINGS**
For more information about the following, see the Worm Composting brochure.

**Worm bins**
- Takes some time and effort
- For indoors and outdoors
- Produces excellent fertilizer
- Most fun, especially for kids

**Closed-air systems**
- Low maintenance
- Prone to odor & insect problems

**Underground composting**
- Requires digging a hole each time you add new materials
- No harvesting necessary

Remember...
Whenever you compost fruit & vegetable trimmings, the Health Department requires a rodent-resistant system. Use a container with a lid, a floor, and holes no bigger than 1/4 inch, or bury food scraps at least one foot under the soil surface. For more information about bins, see the Compost Bins–Sources & Designs brochure.