Basic Composting

- Some time and effort to set up and maintain
- 3’ x 3’ or more yard space needed
- Makes small to large amounts of finished compost

To add fruit and vegetable trimmings to basic compost bins, first be sure your bin is rodent-resistant—it needs a floor, a lid, and no holes bigger than 1/4”. Ideally, the whole bin is enclosed in 1/4” wire mesh (see the Composting Bins brochure for sources and designs). Second, always bury food into the compost piles (exposed food can attract pests). No more than 1/3 of your pile should be fruit and vegetable trimmings. For more detailed instructions, see the “Mixed” compost recipe in the Basic Composting brochure.

Underground Composting

- Some time and effort
- Requires some yard space
- No harvesting necessary—enriches soil directly

Simply Bury Fruit and Vegetable Trimmings at least one foot under the soil surface as often as you like. This means a 6” layer of compostables requires an 18”–deep hole. Dig your hole in a different place each time. You can plant shallow-rooted plants (like lettuce) immediately. One to three months later you can plant deeper-rooted plants (like most shrubs and trees), or bury more compostables in the same place.

Remember…

Composting fruit and vegetable trimmings requires special care. To avoid rodents, flies and bad odor, just follow the simple guidelines in this brochure. Also, the Health Department requires a rodent-resistant system. Use a container with a lid, a floor, and no holes bigger than 1/4 inch, or bury food scraps at least one foot underground.

Resources

More Composting Brochures
Basic Composting

Compost Education Center
Stop by the center at Garden for the Environment at 7th Ave. and Lawton! It features compost bins and how-to signs. Open all daylight hours.

Free Workshops
Sign up for our urban composting workshops! Call Garden for the Environment for a current schedule.

Books

Worm Sources
Cole Hardware in San Francisco, (415) 753-2653
Sonoma Valley Worm Farm, (707) 996-8561
The Rutline (415) 731-5627
The Rutline answers composting questions.

Worm Farming is nature’s way of recycling. It is a satisfying way to turn your fruit, vegetable and yard trimmings into a dark, crumbly, sweet-smelling soil conditioner.

Composting:
- Saves you money by lowering garbage bills and replacing store-bought soil conditioners.
- Helps garden and house plants by improving the fertility and health of your soil.
- Saves water by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff.
- Benefits the environment by recycling valuable organic resources and extending the life of your landfill.

Compost Do’s and Don’ts

Do compost
- All fruit and vegetable trimmings
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Tea bags
- Citrus rinds
- Rinsed-out, crushed eggshells
- Used paper towels
- Soft green plant trimmings

Don’t compost
- Meat, bones and fish
- Dairy products and grease
- Grains, beans and breads
- Dog, cat and bird feathers
- Sawdust from plywood or treated wood
- Woody pruning (in closed-air system, worm bins, or underground)

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