

Home Composting

Mini Guide

Composting is the decomposition of organic material. Over one third of household waste is compostable. Composting is easy. It reduces waste and returns nutrients to the soil.

Anything that has lived can be composted. A full list of materials is printed below.

Making compost right is a bit like baking a cake! The right mix of ingredients will produce excellent results. Brown materials (carbon rich) are slow to rot but essential to the process. Green materials (full of nitrogen) are compost activators and need to be balanced by a larger amount of brown material.

The length of time it takes to compost material varies depending on the mix of green and brown material, moisture and air content. It could be ready in 3-4 months but the rule of thumb is a year.

The aim of composting is to turn organic waste into crumbly compost. When compost is ready for use there should be hardly any trace of the parent material and it should crumble simply through your fingers.

Compost Trouble-Shooter

My compost is slimy & smells!

Too much nitrogen material such as grass. Add more brown ingredients, see list.

My compost is taking ages to decompose!

Be patient - Turn the material regularly to speed up the process.

My compost smells like rotten eggs!

Not enough air. Turn the contents every day for a week, then regularly for a month.

The compost material is damp and soggy

The material added may be too wet or the composter is located in too cool an area. Add a batch of materials such as weeds or hedge trimmings.

There are a lot of flies in the composter!

Put a layer of newspaper or grass cuttings at the top of the composter daily, or leave the lid open during the day.

Will rodents be attracted to the composter?

Composting shouldn't attract rodents into your garden. Most gardens are home to rats and mice. Place the composter in an open area away from streams or other water areas. Plant lavender or rosemary close by as their scent deters rodents. If you are worried place the composter on a layer of birdcage wire & turn up the edges.

Remember wash your hands after gardening or handling compost.



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✓ Add Greens

- ✓ Grass Clippings
- ✓ Kitchen food scraps - uncooked
- ✓ Old vegetables and vegetable peelings:
e.g. Carrot, onion, potato skins
- ✓ Old fruit and fruit peels:
e.g. apple cores, banana skins
- ✓ Manure - cow, sheep, horse, pig,
rabbit, guinea pig
- ✓ Old bedding plants
- ✓ Green weeds
- ✓ Dead flowers
- ✓ Seaweed
- ✓ Tea leaves/Teabags
- ✓ Plant shrub prunings and trimmings

✓ Add Browns

- ✓ Old straw or hay
- ✓ Bark or woodchips
- ✓ Autumn leaves
- ✓ Dry brown weeds
- ✓ Hair - human or pet
- ✓ Hoover bag contents
- ✓ Coffee grounds/ filters
- ✓ Paper/soft cardboard - shredded
- ✓ Corrugated cardboard - shredded
- ✓ Newspaper - shredded
- ✓ Eggshells - rinsed and crushed

✗ Do Not Add

- ✗ Meat (raw or cooked)
- ✗ Fish bones/ fish scraps
- ✗ Grease, oil or fatty foods
- ✗ Dairy products
- ✗ Coal ashes/ barbecue coals
- ✗ Brightly coloured card/ paper with
coloured inks
- ✗ Disposable nappies
- ✗ Cat, dog or human excrement
- ✗ Glass
- ✗ Plastics
- ✗ Metals
- ✗ Textiles
- ✗ Pernicious weeds
(e.g. couch grass, creeping buttercup).