

Backyard Composting

<http://www.hennepin.us/portal/site/HennepinUS/menuitem.b1ab75471750e40fa01dfb47ccf06498/?vgnnextoid=b1d8d070fe733210VgnVCM10000049114689RCRD>

March 15, 2012

Backyard composting is an easy way to turn much of the waste from your yard and kitchen into a rich organic material that you can use to improve your soil.

The benefits of composting

- Reduces the amount of garbage your household produces.
- Reduces the amount of water and fertilizer required for your yard and garden by suppressing weeds and holding moisture in the soil.
- Improves soil quality and supplies essential nutrients for plant growth.

How to compost

1. Place your bin in a convenient location for easy access. A shady or sunny spot will work. You can purchase a bin or build your own.
2. Add the correct materials.
 - Add food and yard waste, including:
 - Vegetable and fruit scraps
 - Coffee ground and filters
 - Tea leaves and tea bags
 - Egg shells
 - Nut shells
 - Plant trimmings
 - Grass and leaves
 - Do not add fats or animal products, including:
 - Butter, cheese or dairy products
 - Meat or bones
 - Gravies or sauces
 - Pet wastes
 - As a general rule, add three parts of dry ingredients – leaves or dry grass – to one part of wet food waste.
3. Mix up the pile with a shovel or pitchfork at least once a month.

Backyard composting tips

- Keep your compost pile at the right moisture level. If your compost pile has a bad odor, it lacks air circulation or it may be too wet. Try turning the pile and/or adding dry material to the pile.
- If your compost pile is not heating up, it may need more nitrogen or "green" material. Add grass clippings or a nitrogen fertilizer to the pile.
- Bury kitchen scraps at least 8 inches deep in the compost pile to discourage critters.
- You can keep adding to your compost pile as it is composting. However, you may want to start a second pile if you have enough materials.
- Add a layer of straw or hay to the top of your compost pile in the winter to keep it warm.
- The best pile is made up of a variety of materials.
- The smaller the pieces of compost material, the faster the pile will decompose.

If you don't want to maintain a back yard bin, remember that you can still collect organics and take them to the [Brooklyn Park drop-off facility](#).

Resources

Contact

Hennepin County

Environmental Services

Phone: 612-348-3777

FAX: 612-348-8532

TDD: 612-596-6985

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location:

We've moved!

701 Fourth Avenue South, Suite 700

Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842

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