

Composting

Why Compost?

Yard waste makes up 20 to 30% of the solid waste of most municipalities throughout the United States, while food waste makes up another 8-9%. The cost of collecting, hauling and handling yard waste is often a large part of the budget associated with municipal solid waste management, nationwide averaging 20% of the budget and increasing to as much as 50% when grass clippings and leaves are handled.



In 1993, New Hampshire passed a law that prohibits the landfilling or incineration of leaf and yard waste Materials.

Benefits of Composting

- Composting is a waste prevention measure. It reduces, at the source, the amount of organic material that needs to be collected, managed and transported by the Town.
- Saves you money by reducing the need for lawn bags and commercial soil additives.
- It's a valuable soil conditioner that helps your garden and lawn by improving the fertility and health of you soil.
- Helps save water by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff.
- Benefits the environments by recycling valuable organic resources.
- Extends the life of landfills.

Backyard Composting

What is Composting?

Composting is nature's way of recycling. Composting is a natural process of decomposition of organic material into a rich soil amendment.

How can I use compost?

Compost can be applied to enrich the flower and vegetable garden, to top-dress the lawn, and as mulch around trees and shrubs. Houseplants and planter boxes will benefit from combining compost with the potting soil. Before using, it is best to sift the compost through a one-half inch mesh hardware cloth. The remaining coarse material may then be put back into a new compost pile.



Heavy clay or light sandy soil will benefit most from the addition of compost. Apply a 2 to 3 inch layer on the soil surface and thoroughly work it into the upper 6 to 8 inches of soil.

Surface Area- Material decomposes faster if the microorganisms have more surfaces with which to work. Chopping garden waste with a shovel, running it through a shredding machine or lawnmower, speeds it composting.

Size- The ideal size for the pile is 4 feet wide and 4 feet high by any convenient length. Smaller piles have trouble holding heat and larger piles may have aeration difficulties.

Moisture and Aeration- The microbes work best when the pile is as moist as a wrung out sponge and has plenty of air passages. Too much sun will dry out the pile and too much water will make it soggy.

Time and Temperature – The hotter the pile, the faster the composting, ideal composting temperature range from 100 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit. With proper amounts of water, air and materials, compost can be made in 2-3 months.

Composting Problems		
Symptoms	Problems	Solutions
Bad odor	Not enough air, pile is too wet	Turn it, add coarse materials such as straw, hay, corn stalks, etc.
Center of pile is dry	Not enough water, and too much woody material	Turn moisten, add fresh green waste, chop coarse waste.
Compost is damp and warm only in the middle	Pile is too small	Add more material, mix old ingredients into new pile.
Pile is damp and sweet smelling, but won't heat up	Lack of nitrogen	Add fresh grass clippings, fresh manure, bloodmeal, or ammonium sulfate
Pest problem; bird, animals, rats, dogs, etc.	Undesirable food wastes	Remove any fish, meat, bones, or dairy products. Cover or bury vegetable scraps.