

Why compost?

- Reduces landfill volume
- Reduces odors in household garbage
- Lightens weight of full household garbage bags
- Creates great organic booster for gardens
- An easy, natural way to get rid of a lot of your garbage

What goes in?

- Almost all foods: vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, coffee grinds, tea bags, orange peels, no-longer good produce, grains, bread, pasta, eggshells
- Yard waste: grass clippings, leaves, garden plants
- Houseplants, flowers

What doesn't go in?

- Meat, fish, grease, milk products (you can put these in but critters will come and eat them)
- Diseased plants
- Pet waste
- Bones and corn cobs (they don't decay fast enough)
- Other biodegradable stuff (paper cups, plates, coffee filters). These are OK in big industrial composters but not in home versions.

Keeping the balance

For garden booster: a mix of food waste (the greens) and bulky stuff like leaves and grass (the browns) is recommended, with 1 part green to 2 parts brown. To just want to get rid of food waste: add enough browns to keep everything covered. Compost needs air to decay, so turn it over with a shovel once in a while. It also needs water, so if it's not raining on the pile, add water now and then (and it's ok to dump left over coffee, old juice, etc. in the kitchen bucket).

How and where to do it?

Black plastic composters are nice because they keep the material warm enough to encourage decomposition and because the lids usually lock to keep out animals. Manitoulin hardware stores sell composters. However, even a small hole in the ground will work. In an out of the way spot, dig a hole approximately 1 m (3 ft) across and 40 cm (2 ft) deep. Add waste material and cover with leaves or grass clippings. Turn with a shovel now and then. Nothing to it!

When to use the compost

Compost decays best when it is warm, so it needs at least one summer (or a heat source) to form. Check the compost in the spring after one year. The most recently-added material on the top will not be broken down, but the bottom of the pile should be dark black and ready to be dug out.

There are lots of creative ways to make compost happen, from types of composters, additives, worms, and more. The above is only the very basics.

Composting for beginners is also outlined very simply here:

<https://www.sodgod.com/composting/>