



What is Compost?

Compost is a dark, crumbly, and earthy smelling form of decomposing organic matter.

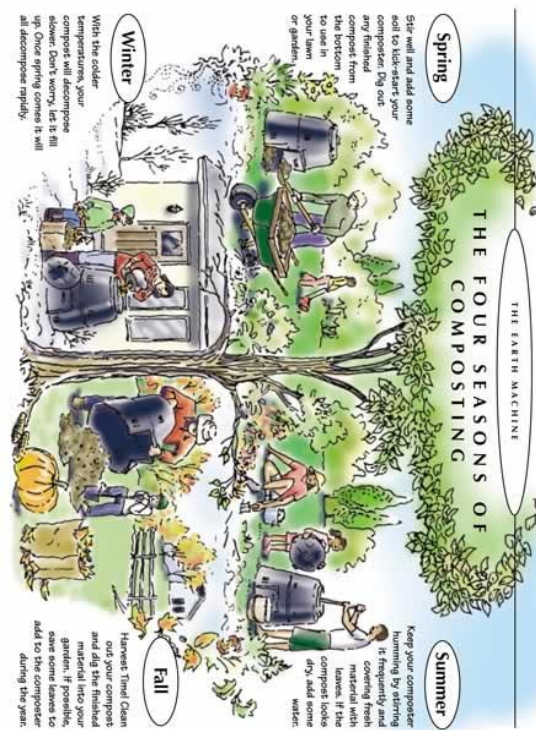
Why Should I Make Compost?

Composting is the most practical and convenient way to handle your yard and organic kitchen wastes. **It can also reduce your household garbage by up to 30%.** Compost improves your soil and the plants growing in it. If you have a garden, a lawn, trees, shrubs, or even planter boxes, you have a use for compost.

Organic matter in the soil improves plant growth by helping to break up heavy clay soils and improving their structure, by adding water and nutrient-holding capacity to sandy soils, and by adding essential nutrients to any soil. Healthy plants help clean our air and conserve our soil, making our communities healthier places in which to live.

What Can I Compost?

Yard wastes, such as fallen leaves, grass clippings, weeds, food scraps such as vegetable and fruit, make excellent compost. When recycling kitchen waste, take care not to include meat, bones and fatty foods (such as cheese, salad dressing, and leftover cooking oil). Put in the garbage.



Information for the creation of this educational brochure was taken from:

Cornell Cooperative Extension
cwmi.css.cornell.edu/compostbrochure.pdf

and Earth Machine™
www.earthmachine.com/how_to_compost.html

websites.

This program was created through the Zero Waste Pilot Project Initiative in partnership with the EPA, and with grant assistance from the NYSDEC



NEW PALTZ RECYCLING CENTER



BACKYARD COMPOSTING: “Zero Waste Initiative Program”



Susan Zimet, Town Supervisor

Town Board: Kevin Barry
Kristen Brown
Jean Gallucci
Jeff Logan

Laura Petit, Recycling Coordinator
3 Clearwater Road, New Paltz, NY 12561
Tel 845-255-8456 Fax 845-255-4153
email: recycling@townofnewpaltz.org
reuse@townofnewpaltz.org
www.newpaltzreuse.org

**Hours of Operation: Tuesday through Saturday
9:00am to 5:00pm (ReUse Center closes at 4:30pm)**

What To Compost

Your compost bin will work best if it is fed a diet of green (nitrogen-rich) and brown (carbon-rich) materials. Check out the list of kitchen and yard waste “greens” and “browns”.

KITCHEN “GREENS”

Fruit & vegetable scraps
Coffee grounds
Rice & pasta
Egg Shells



KITCHEN “BROWNS”

Coffee filters, stale bread
Paper napkins & towels
Hair



YARD “GREENS”

Vegetables
Plant trimmings
Hedge clippings
Grass (small amounts)



YARD “BROWNS”

Leaves
Straw or hay
Small twigs/chips
Dried grass and weeds



How To Compost

Composting is easy – it happens on its own. However, there are a few things you can do to speed up the composting process. Just follow these four steps:



CHOP

Chop up larger items like watermelon rinds or corn cobs before putting them in a container or directly into your compost bin.



Starter Mix

Start with a layer of dirt in the bottom of your compost bin. Add “greens” (egg shells, food scraps); cover with “browns” (napkins, leaves) and put cover back on container.

Mixture should be kept moist – like a damp sponge. Moisture and air are the key elements to a successful backyard composting program.



STIR

Mix the new material into the existing pile using a pitchfork or other garden tool. This also adds oxygen, a key component to successful composting.



COVER

Cover your food waste with a handful of old leaves, other dried yard waste or soil. This will add carbon and reduce the chance of odors and fruit flies. Then put the lid back on and let it “cook”.

Harvesting Your Compost

After a few months, the kitchen scraps near the bottom of your compost bin will have decomposed and will look much like soil. There are two ways of harvesting this finished compost: (1) just scoop a few shovels of compost through the compost bin door, or (2) lift the compost bin up and use as much finished compost as possible.



You may want to use a screen to separate the unfinished material from the finished compost known as a trommel screen.

TIP: You can make your own trommel screen in minutes with 1/4 inch hardware cloth or old wire fencing and a wood frame.



Compost Problems and Solutions

SYMPTOM	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
The compost has bad odor.	Not enough air.	Turn it & add coarser material. Sticks, wood chips, etc.
The center of the pile is dry.	Not enough water.	Moisten material while turning the pile.
The compost is damp & warm in the middle but nowhere else.	Pile too small.	Collect more material & mix old material in with the newer.
The heap is damp and sweet smelling, but still will not heat up.	Lack of nitrogen.	Add fresh grass clippings, fresh manure, vegetable scraps, coffee grounds.