

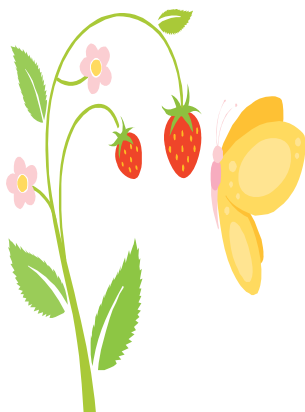
COMPOST IS AN ENRICHED SOIL ADDITIVE MADE FROM KITCHEN SCRAPS AND OTHER MATERIALS. IT IS A BENEFICIAL SOIL ADDITIVE AND FERTILIZER THAT YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF. YOU CAN ALSO REDUCE YOUR HOME TRASH VOLUME SIMPLY BY ADDING THROWN AWAY FOOD TO A COMPOST PILE.

KICKAPOO ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE

# Compost Ingredients

Making compost is nothing more than allowing things to rot. Dead leaves and grass turn into soil eventually, but it takes time, as much as 8 or more weeks. You can speed it up a bit by adding dry cow manure to your compost pile. Cow manure has beneficial bacteria in it to help break scraps down. Don't use pet manure, as it may contain diseases.

**Turning the compost pile two or three times per week gets air to the beneficial bacteria in compost. When you aerate compost it speeds up the process.**



| Material          | Carbon/Nitrogen | Info                                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Table scraps      | nitrogen        | Add with dry carbon items            |
| Fruit & Veggies   | nitrogen        | Add with dry carbon items            |
| eggshells         | neutral         | Best when crushed                    |
| leaves            | carbon          | they break down faster when shredded |
| Grass clippings   | nitrogen        | Add in thin layers to avoid matting  |
| Lawn/garden weeds | nitrogen        | Only weeds that haven't gone to seed |
| Straw or hay      | carbon          | Straw is best                        |
| Pine needles      | carbon          | Acidic, use in moderation            |
| flowers, cuttings | nitrogen        | Chop up the stems                    |
| Wood ash          | carbon          | Only use ash from clean materials    |
| Cow manure        | nitrogen        | Excellent compost "activator"        |
| coffee grounds    | nitrogen        | Filters may also be included         |
| Tea leaves        | nitrogen        |                                      |
| newspaper         | carbon          | Avoid glossy paper or colored ink    |
| Shredded paper    | carbon          | Same as above                        |
| cardboard         | carbon          | Egg cartons are great, shredded      |
| sawdust           | carbon          | High carbon levels, avoid clumping   |
| Wood chips        | carbon          | High carbon levels, use sparingly    |
| Fried Bread       | Carbon          | Are you really throwing it away?     |

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# The Making of Compost

A Definition: *Compost* \* a mixture of various decaying organic substances used for fertilizing soil.

Compost is a beneficial additive to your soil; it is a fertilizer that you make yourself from kitchen scraps, leaves, and other things that you mostly throw away. Making compost can reduce your trash volume by as much as 30%. The compost enriches and aerates your soil by introducing beneficial micro organisms. You can make compost the year round.

Try making compost and see if your vegetables don't taste better than they ever have.

## The Compost Bin

You can make compost in a pile on the ground, but you have to watch it close for drying and turn it more frequently to aerate it. Or, you can make a simple bin out of wood, pallets, chicken wire, hay bails, or even a garbage can with drainage holes drilled into it. There are also commercial bins available that simplify the composting process. I made a bin once out of some wood scraps and a couple of pallets. I nailed the wood to make a box about 6 feet long and 3 feet wide, and I used the earth as the floor. I left one end of the bin loose, so I could use it as a door. I covered the compost pile with a tarp, or plastic, to keep the rain from getting the compost too wet. Basically, I made a pile of compost by adding scraps to one side of the bin. Every week I would turn the compost with a pitchfork or shovel by flipping it to the other side of the bin. This allowed the material to aerate, as air is very important to the compost pile. In time, the compost pile started steaming, and soon I had a large batch of soil fertilizer. I used the compost to mix in the garden soil, and I also made compost tea which I sprayed onto the garden plants. The vegetables from that garden that year were some of the best I've ever had. They were crisp and healthy and full of flavor. Of course, that is what a good fertilizer is supposed to do.

A compost pile needs three things:

1. Browns.....dead leaves, sawdust, newspaper, cardboard
2. Greens.....table scraps, fruit, grass clippings, coffee grounds
3. Water

The proper ratio is 4 parts brown to one part green. So you need a lot more carbon than nitrogen. The water amount calls for damp but not saturated. Too much, or too little, water is not a good thing. Water is needed as a medium for microscopic bacteria.