

Creation Care: How to Compost

How to make a DIY Outdoor Compost

1. **Bin:** Find an 18 gallon storage bin.
2. **Leaves:** Add a layer of leaves to the bottom of the bin.
3. **Dirt:** Add a layer of dirt on top of the leaves.
4. **Holes:** Vent the storage bin lid w/t 8-10 small holes.
5. **Location:** Put your compost bin outside in a place where it will get some shade during the day.

How to Compost

1. **Collect Scraps:** Throughout the week, collect food scraps in an ice cream bucket on your kitchen counter (or under the sink). Use an ice cream bucket with a lid.
2. **Add Green Material:** Every 3-7 days, add the collected food scraps to your compost pile.
3. **Add Brown Material & Water:** Mix in water and brown material (ex: dried leaves/cardboard) with the food scraps.
4. **Stir:** After everything is added, stir the compost w/t a shovel or gardening tool.

TIPS

Chop fruits/veggies into small pieces so they break down faster.

To keep animals away, don't compost meat/animal products (rinse eggshells before composting).

Keep your compost bin in a place where it will get some shade during the day.

What can you compost?

GREENS (FOOD)

- fruit/veggie peels
- melon/citrus rinds
- produce (fruits & veggies)
- coffee grounds
- stale bread/pasta/cereal
- eggshells (rinsed - egg yolks/whites may attract animals)
- grass clippings
- + much more!

BROWNS

- cardboard / greasy pizza boxes
- leaves
- twigs
- coffee filters
- shredded paper/ newspaper / brown paper bags
- used paper towels
- + much more!

TIPS

If it came from the ground (ex: plants, fruits/veggies, paper products), it's probably compostable.

Not sure if something is compostable? Ask Google!

If it's a paper product (from trees), it's probably compostable. Be careful of colored inks/dyes.

Greasy pizza boxes cannot be recycled, but they can be composted! Cut the pizza box into smaller pieces before composting.

What is composting?

A **compost** is a pile of decayed organic matter. Almost anything that comes from the ground is considered **organic matter**. (ex: twigs, fruit/veggie scraps, grains)

Composting returns **nutrients** to the soil.

Instead of throwing waste in the trash (where it will end up in a landfill), you throw it in a **compost pile**.

In the compost pile, this organic matter is able to **break down properly** (unlike it does in a landfill trapped under plastics/trash).

Why is composting important?

When food waste/scrap are sent to the landfill, they produce **methane**, a harmful greenhouse gas. Methane is produced because food scraps are hidden under our trash (plastic, etc.) and unable to get the oxygen they need to properly decompose.

About 25% of the manmade climate change we're experiencing is caused by methane emissions.

Composting allows food scraps to properly decompose (meaning no methane is produced!)

Benefits of Composting

It's **FREE!**

Compost is a great **fertilizer** for plants, trees, and gardens. (Compost enriches the soil.)

Composting limits the waste you send to a landfill, reducing your contribution to harmful **methane emissions!**

Composting requires very **low maintenance.**

Winter Composting

Winter composts need more **brown material** (leaves, cardboard, etc.) to stay active.

Use **leaves** to insulate the compost.

It's okay if your compost freezes. (It's just like a freezer - the food scraps will be preserved and won't smell.) Stir on warmer days if the compost has thawed out.

Water sparingly (when it won't freeze immediately.)

You can move the compost to your **garage.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the compost smell?

No, the compost should not smell. If it gets overheated from the sun and is too wet, it might start to smell. If that happens, add brown material (ex: leaves, cardboard).

Does it attract bugs?

Mine hasn't! If you stir the compost well every time you add food scraps, bugs shouldn't be a problem.

Is composting a big commitment?

No! Composting is SO easy. The amount of time you want to invest in the compost is up to you. I spend about 5 minutes a week stirring the compost. Couldn't be easier.

Can you compost inside? In an apartment?

Yes! Look in to countertop composting.

How long does it take to break down?

This depends on a few things like what scraps are in your compost and how big they are. A compost typically takes around 1-4 months to break down.

What should I do when my compost bin is full?

Stop adding food scraps to the bin. Start a new "mini compost" in a 5 gallon bucket (or freeze new scraps in your freezer). Stir compost bin every 3-7 days until everything breaks down. (Could take a few weeks.)

After scraps break down, use compost as a fertilizer for your garden, plants, trees, etc. Pour "mini compost" into the empty bin.