

COMPOSTING A TO Z

Producing your own “Black Gold”

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The Natural Cycle of Recycling



The breakdown releases nutrients



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Backyard Composting



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Where to place your compost pile

- Within reach of a garden hose
- Convenient to your house
- If possible, away from trees or bushes (roots will find compost)
- At least 30' from streams, wells or lakes (nitrogen runoff)
- Be considerate of your neighbor's view



Steps to Make A Compost Bin

Materials

- Tape Measure
- 13 Foot of wire
- Wire cutters
- Pitch Fork



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Step 1: Measure out 13 feet of wire



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Step 2: Cut one end flush, one w/prongs



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Step 3: Set upright forming a cylinder



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Step 4: Fasten ends w/prongs facing out



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Completed Bin



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Filling your Compost Bin

Know your 'GREENS' and 'BROWNS'

GREENS

- Green usually come from organic materials that are still have there living color
- Adds Nitrogen to your compost

BROWNS

- Browns are organic materials that have died and/or lost there color
- Adds Carbon to your compost

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GREENS

Add Nitrogen
to your
Compost

- Fruit Scraps
- Fresh Grass Clippings
- Vegetable Scraps
- Manure
- Lake Weeds
- Coffee Grounds
- Tea Grounds
- Dead flowers



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BROWNS



Add Carbon to
your Compost



- Paper (non-recyclable)
- Sawdust
- Pine needles
- Leaves
- Straw
- Hay



Free Calcium
Fertilizer

Great for keeping
your vegetables
healthy



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Solutions

Start with a layer of browns

A carbon source ("leaves")



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Break up any clumps



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Be sure to add some GREENS

A nitrogen source, “Rabbit Pellets”



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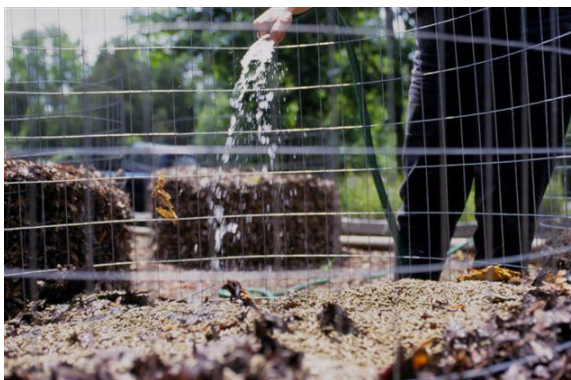
Mix GREENS into the BROWNS



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As damp as a wrung out sponge



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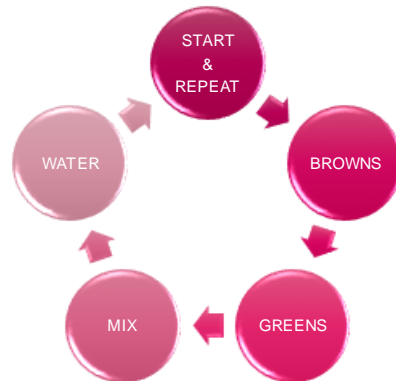
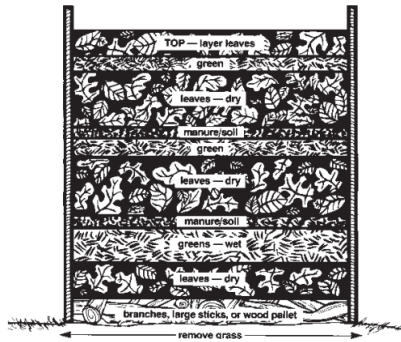
Cap with final layer of BROWNS



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REPEAT



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Completed batch



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Carbon to Nitrogen Ratio (C/N)

30:1

(Describes Chemical composition of material not volume!)

Hard to determine exactly

Don't Worry!

- Generally get good results by adding equal parts of brown and green by weight
- Okay to improvise. Experiment!

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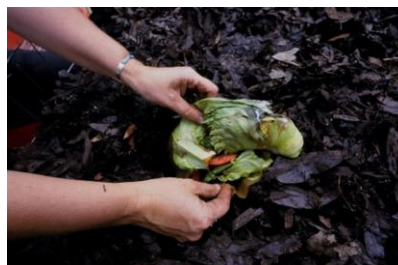
Adding kitchen scraps



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Place scraps into the hole



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Cover scraps with leaves



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Mark the spot for reference



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NEVER put these items in an Compost Pile

They can create bad odors which could attract animals.

- Bones
- Cat Litter
- Charcoal
- Cooked food waste
- Dairy Products
- Fish Scraps
- Meat
- Paper, glossy colored
- Peanut butter
- Pet Wastes
- Human Excrement
- Sludge
- Plants/Gra
- ss treated with chemicals
- Diseased Plants
- Weeds that have seeded

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Pile heats up, volume decreases



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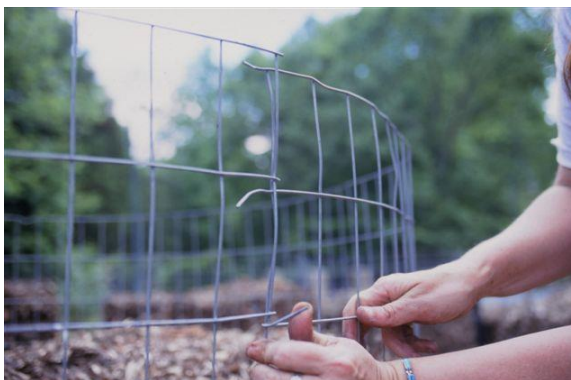
Turning the pile

- Turn one week after assembling
- Turn at least every three to four weeks
- The more you turn the pile, the faster it will decompose
- If you have more than one pile, you can combine piles as they decrease in volume

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Unfasten the prongs



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Unwrap the pile



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Set up near first pile



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Toss the pile back into the bin



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Add water, if necessary



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Pile starting to breakdown



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Worms love compost



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Composting Kits



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Using Compost has lots of benefits



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Less fertilizer needed



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Compost loosens our clay soils



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**Adding compost is an easy way to
improve soil drainage, fertility and pH!**

Gardeners call it “Black Gold”

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Composting is a way to recycle!

- It reduces waste and adds fertility to the soil
- Nature does this through Decomposition!!!



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Where to use your compost

- New garden beds and plantings
 - Dig in 2-3" of compost in top 6"
- Vegetable gardens/transplants
 - 2-3" on beds and some in each hole
- Existing garden beds
 - 1" layer around plants

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Where to use your compost

- Natural areas
 - ½" under mulch
- Side dressings trees/shrubs
 - Scratch ½" from 1" out from the stem or trunk of plant out to drip line
- Lawns
 - After aeration, spread ½" of compost and rake in
- Houseplants
 - 2/3 potting soil, 1/3 compost

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Compost can also be purchased

- In Bags- from big box stores, or nurseries
- Bulk- pickup truck or delivered
- Compost Central
- Landscape suppliers



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Great Soil Building practices:

- Adding compost to your soil
- Using Mulches- (shredded leaves work great!)
- Grass from your lawn clippings
- Decrease chemical use

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Composting Troubleshooting

Symptom	Problem	Soultion
The pile smells like rancid butter, vinegar, or rotten eggs	The pile is too wet, or there is not enough air, or there is too much nitrogen	Turn the pile; mix in leaves, straw, sawdust, or wood chips
The pile is not heating up	The pile is too small, too dry, or does not contain enough nitrogen	Make the pile larger, provide insulation, add water while turning, and add nitrogen sources.
The pile is attracting animals	Food scraps are not well covered or meat and/or dairy products were added	Cover food with brown leaves, wood chips, or finished compost; keep meat and/or dairy out of the pile; enclose the pile in 1/4" hardware cloth
The pile is damp but won't heat up	There is not enough nitrogen	Mix in grass clippings, food scraps, and other sources of nitrogen
The pile is dry	There is not enough moisture or too much airflow	Water and mix well; cover loosely with a tarp or landscape fabric to help hold in moisture
The pile is damp and warm in the middle but nowhere else	The pile is too small	Add more material and moisten

More Information

North Carolina Composting Council

www.carolinacompost.com

NC State Cooperative Extension

www.ces.ncsu.edu

Mecklenburg County Solid Waste – place to purchase compost

www.wipeoutwaste.com

Cornell Composting

[Http://compost.css.cornell.edu](http://compost.css.cornell.edu)

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Community Gardening

– School and Community Gardening Recourses

- go.ncsu.edu/gardening

– Directory of Community Gardens Across Mecklenburg County

- In progress
- go.ncsu.edu/mecklenburgcommunitygardens

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Compost is a Gardener's Black Gold

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Thank you!



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