



Composting for the Home Garden

Compost is the most important amendment you can add to your garden soil. It is a simple way to add nutrient-rich humus which fuels plant growth and restores vitality and structure to depleted or unbalanced soil. It increases the availability of nutrients to plants, and helps the soil retain moisture.

Compost is free, easy to make, and good for the environment.

Composting

- Recycles Kitchen and Yard Waste: Composting can divert a significant amount of household waste away from landfills.
- Introduces Beneficial Organisms to the Soil: The microorganisms in compost help to aerate the soil, break down organic material, and ward off pathogens.
- Is Good for the Environment: Compost used as a soil amendment is a natural alternative to chemical fertilizers and does not contribute to toxic build-up or runoff into the water system.
- Reduces Landfill Waste: A large portion of landfill waste consists of compostable materials.

Ingredients for Healthy Compost

All compostable materials are either carbon-rich (brown) or nitrogen-rich (green). A simple rule of thumb is to maintain approximately 1/3 green to 2/3 brown.

GREEN

Nitrogen-rich Materials:

Vegetable and fruit scraps
Farm derived manures
Grass clippings and green leaves

BROWN

Carbon-rich Materials

Branches
Stems
Dried leaves
Paper bags (shredded)
Coffee grounds and filters
Tea and tea bags
Eggshells
Wood ash
Dryer lint (from natural fibers)

DO NOT COMPOST

Meat or bones
Dairy products
Oil and fats including butter
Processed foods:
bread
pasta
rice
crackers
tofu
bakery products
Dressed salads
Fruits or vegetables with a sauce
Stickers from fruit and vegetables

Additional Resources: Maryland Cooperative Extension <http://extension.umd.edu/hgic>
Environmental Protection Agency www.epa.gov
Cornell Waste Management Institute www.compost.css.cornell.edu/