

Start Composting Now!

Composting is one of the single most important acts an individual can do for the environment!
Spread your knowledge!

What is Composting?

Composting is the transformation of organic material (plant matter), through decomposition, into a soil-like, dark, humus-rich material—“black gold.”

Micro-organisms in composting need:

Food, (see “greens” and “browns” below)
Water, and **Oxygen**

How Do I Start Composting?

1. **Set up bin on level ground or a slight incline, in a convenient location.**
2. **Mix together the “greens” and the “browns” in your bin**

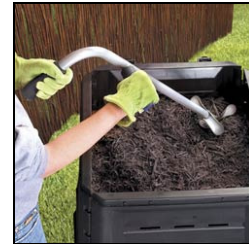
- **For example:** You could start by filling a bin with half grass clippings and half brown leaves (mix well), then bury kitchen scraps in, day by day.



Greens (*Wet, nitrogen-rich, for protein synthesis*)
vegetable and fruit scraps, egg shells, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, nut shells, hair, parts of plants, grass clippings, green leaves, weeds (may need special treatment), manure from grass-eating animals

Browns (*Dry, carbon-rich, for energy*)
brown leaves, egg cartons, paper, shredded paper, cardboard, toilet paper rolls, dryer lint, shrub trimmings, vines, dried cornstalks (shredded), wood chips, sawdust (small quantities, not treated wood)

NO- meat, fish, bones, dairy such as cheese; fats, grease or cooking oils; human, cat or dog feces; diseased plants, invasive weeds (quack grass, bindweed, Japanese knotweed, etc.), BBQ ashes or coal



3. **Aerate for oxygen**

Aerate (turn or mix) every 7-10 days with a shovel, pitchfork, or aerator. Microscopic organisms in center will get more air. This also distributes the moisture. If not enough oxygen, the compost will progress very slowly.

4. **Add water as needed**

Keep as moist as a wrung-out sponge. Add water as needed or leave off top when it's going to rain. Mix well. If not enough water, it won't decompose quickly. If too much water, it won't get enough oxygen and turn anaerobic, starting to smell bad.

How Do I Use Finished Compost?

Finished compost will be a dark brown, coarse, crumbly material with a fresh, earthy smell, and you won't be able to see the original ingredients. May take 3-12 months, or more. Can be used for:

- Soil building (mix in 2-4 weeks before planting, if possible) Improves both sandy and clay soils.
- Garden fertilizer – put around established plants, not seedlings.
- Lawn – shovel onto lawn, then rake to spread a thin layer (1/2 inch)
- Potting mix - (sterilize if starting seedlings, by microwaving, baking or pouring boiling water over it.)

Further Information: www.howtocompost.com

Livingston Ordinance 2008 – compost piles and structures are prohibited in front or side yards