

# Composting is a great way

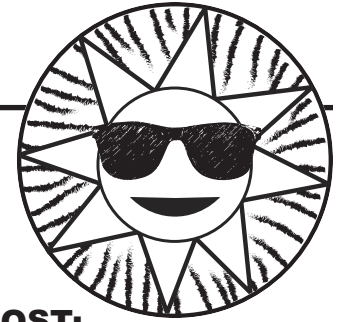
to cut down on unnecessary organic waste and live a more sustainable life.

It is estimated that around 30% of the waste we throw away is comprised of food scraps and yard clippings.

Turning this waste into compost cuts down on methane emissions from landfills, while adding a nutrient-rich material back into the soil.

For beginning gardeners, this is a great way to reduce plant disease and pests, while keeping soil moist and healthy.

We've broken down how you can get started with your own backyard compost.



## composting:

### HOW TO GET STARTED

Make sure you have proper tools such as shovels and pitchforks. Keep the soil moist and turn it regularly.

### FOR COMPOSTING IN YOUR BACKYARD

- Select a dry, shady spot near a source of water
- Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded
- Moisten dry materials as they are added.
- Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and cover the fruit and vegetable waste with 10 inches of compost material  
Optional: cover top of compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months and two years.

### FOR COMPOSTING INDOORS

- Compost materials indoors using a special bin, which you can buy at a local hardware store, gardening supplies store, or make yourself. We offer a countertop composter.
- Remember to maintain your pile and keep track of what you put in it. A properly maintained compost bin will not attract pests or rodents and will not smell bad.
- Keep track of the moisture levels and run occasional tests to measure the acidity of the compost material.
- Once the compost bin is full, move it outside, especially during warmer weather. This helps speed the process.
- Your compost should be ready in two to five weeks.

## COMPOSTING TIPS

In order to compost successfully, you need three components:

**BROWN MATERIAL:** this is made up of items like broken twigs, dead leaves, and dry tree branches.

**GREEN MATERIAL:** this includes things like grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, shredded newspaper.

**WATER:** maintaining the right amount of moisture will compost into nutrient-rich material for your garden

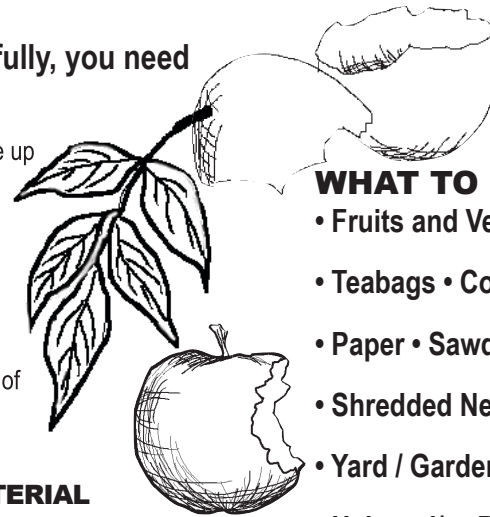
**ONE GALLON OF GREEN MATERIAL FOR EVERY THREE GALLONS OF BROWN MATERIAL IS THE BEST RATIO**

### SOME LIKE IT HOT, SOME LIKE IT COLD

**HOT COMPOSTING** This method requires you to turn over the compost heap contents with a manure pitchfork or long-handled shovel every few months. This adds moisture and aeration and raises the temperature of the compost. When the temperature of the compost reaches 160° F, any seeds in the compost are killed, preventing the spread of weeds when you incorporate the compost into your garden. The hot composting process takes about a year to convert kitchen scraps to healthy garden soil.

**COLD COMPOSTING** This method just requires patience. Let Mother Nature work on the unturned compost heap and you will have compost in 1-1/2 to two years.

**COMPOSTING GADGETS** Special tools such as compost turner or thermometers and additives are unnecessary.



### WHAT TO COMPOST:

- Fruits and Veggies • Egg Shells
- Teabags • Coffee Grounds and Filters
- Paper • Sawdust • Cardboard
- Shredded Newspapers
- Yard / Garden Clippings • Straw
- Hair and/or Pet Fur
- Dryer and Vacuum Cleaner Lint
- Cow, Goat or Chicken Manure

### What Not To Compost

- Dairy Products
- Diseased or Insect-ridden or Invasive Plants  
Diseases or insects might survive and be transferred back to other plants
- Fats, Greases, Lard, Oils  
Odor problems. Attracts pests such as rodents and flies
- Pet Wastes  
(e.g., dog or cat feces, cat litter) Might contain parasites, bacteria, germs, pathogens, and viruses harmful to humans
- Yard Trimmings Treated with Chemical Pesticides  
Might kill organisms that are beneficial to composting

## COMPOST CONTAINMENT

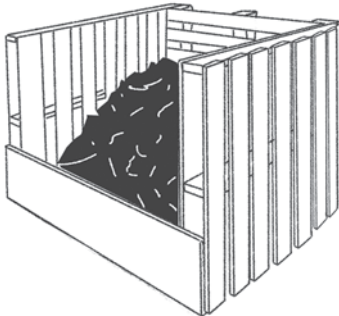
Composting can be as simple as selecting a dry, shady spot near a source of water for your pile. If you prefer a tidier approach, there are several simple ways to make your own compost bin.

Make your compost pile a minimum of 3 cubic feet and no larger than five cubic feet for best results. With a larger pile, it is difficult to get air into the center.

**WIRE CAGE** Make a circle from wire fencing.

**WIRE BIN** Use metal T-posts and fencing to construct.

**PALLET BIN** Upcycled pallets are free. Make sure you ask the store management before removing pallets; some businesses re-use them. Use pallets placed on end construct a 3-sided bin, with the open side facing out for easy access. Some people nail a board across the bottom of the open fourth side to help contain contents; this is optional.



**CINDERBLOCK BIN** Making 3 sides from cinderblocks with a space between each block allows for good airflow.



This diagram shows the blocks (A) arranged in the running brick pattern, with air space (B) in between blocks.

**PLASTIC GARBAGE BINS** A large, household-sized garbage can makes a good compost bin. Punch holes all around the sides to let in air. Use the lid to keep rain out.

**For more information,  
try these useful resources**

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
[www.cceorangecounty.org/gardening](http://www.cceorangecounty.org/gardening)  
 Master Gardener Program: 1-845-344-1234, x240

BUY DISCOUNTED COMPOST BINS HERE.  
[www.orangecompostersale.ecwid.com](http://www.orangecompostersale.ecwid.com)

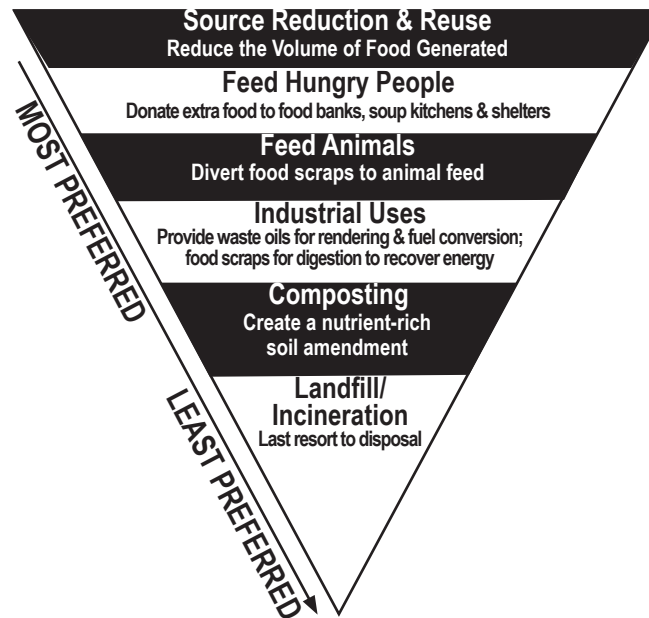
LEARN MORE ABOUT REDUCING WASTE  
 • Reducing Household & Business Food Waste  
 • Composting for home, apartment, school, business, and more.

[www.orangecountygov.com/1485/Organics](http://www.orangecountygov.com/1485/Organics)

APARTMENT DWELLER? LOVE WORMS?  
 LEARN ABOUT VERMICOMPOSTING  
[csetompkins.org/resources/compost-indoor-worm-compost](http://csetompkins.org/resources/compost-indoor-worm-compost)

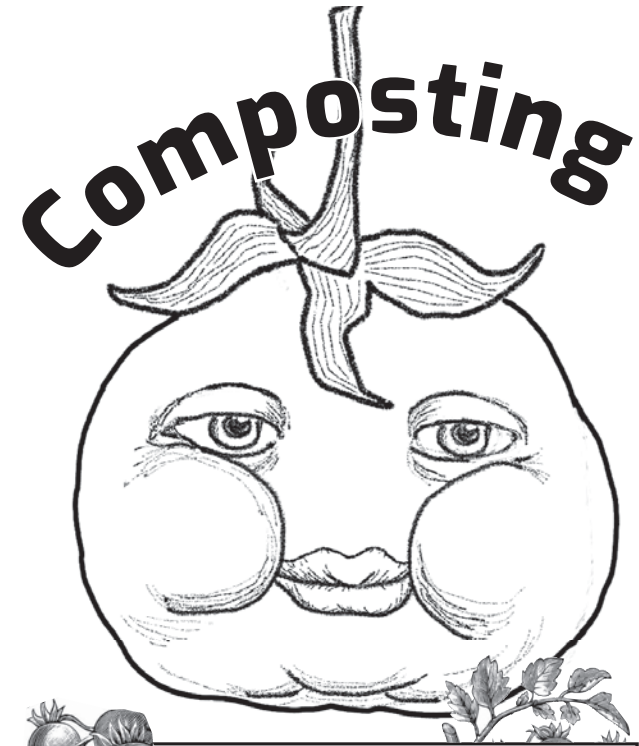


## FOOD RECOVERY



## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

# Composting



### HOW TO:

- Decrease Waste
- Cut Landfill Methane Emissions
- Get Great Garden Soil
- Reduce Garden Pests and Disease

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