



Composting is nature's way of turning everyday "waste" into a valuable soil conditioner.

- **Saves you money** by reducing the need for expensive bags and commercial soil additives.
- **Helps your garden** and lawn by improving the fertility and health of your soil.
- **Saves water** by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff.
- **Benefits the environment** by recycling valuable organic resources and extending the lives of our landfills.

To set up a good compost system:

Basically, all you need for effective composting are three components - **organic matter, water,** and **oxygen.** So, at a minimum, find a place to pile waste materials (following sidebar recommendations) that is exposed to rain and let Nature do its work. The more water and oxygen that it's exposed to, the quicker materials will break down. So there are many perforated bin designs that can be constructed or purchased that maximize air flow to compost material. Periodically turning your compost (once a month with a shovel is good) keeps nutrients mixed up, introduces oxygen and water to layers, discourages molds from forming (especially with grass clippings), and keeps weeds under control.

When doing planting projects, use this rich compost mixture around roots of new plants or sprinkled as nutritious mulch around existing plots to maximize plant growth, reduce waste, and save some cash.

What items can be composted?

Grass & leaves

An even mix of grass clippings (high in Nitrogen) and autumn leaves (high in Carbon) make an ideal balance of nutrients for outdoor gardening

Other yard clippings

Pulled weeds (as long as you've not soaked them in Roundup or something), prunings, wood chips, small twigs, and other organic detritus

Kitchen waste

Egg shells (especially nutritious for vegetable plants and protect tomato plants from a wide range of fungal pests), peels, stems, moldy bread, old veggies... nearly anything that doesn't contain meat or milk (which can carry germs and promote insect pests).

Paper, box board, and cardboard

These add strong fiber content to soil that holds moisture and other nutrients. You can even lay cardboard scraps down directly in garden plots in areas to suppress weed growth and then simply leave them in place to decompose or add other layers on top.

DO NOT COMPOST meat, cheese, milk, human waste, cleaning agents, lawn chemicals, plastic, foam, treated wood, sand, rocks, ex-lovers, or vampires.