

How do I compost?

Composting is easy. By following these instructions, you'll help to accelerate the natural decomposition process to produce healthy soil.

Step 1: Get a bin. Obtain a bin or an area in your yard that is approximately one cubic yard (3'x3'x3'). Size is important for the proper temperature. Piles that are too small cannot hold enough heat for effective microbial activity. Piles that are too large (more than 5 feet cubed) do not allow enough air to reach microbes in the center of the pile.

Step 2: Mix your browns and greens. Mix two parts brown materials (dry leaves, small twigs, straw, etc.) with one part green materials (grass clippings, kitchen scraps, etc.). This 2:1 ratio provides the best mix of carbon (browns) to nitrogen (greens).

Step 3: Chop! Chop or break up any twigs and large pieces of fruit and vegetable waste. Materials will break down more quickly with increased surface area.

Step 4: Keep it moist. Water your compost as often as necessary to keep it moist—like a wrung-out sponge.

Step 5: Turn it. Compost needs air. Turning the compost anywhere from every few days to every few weeks will help it break down and will prevent unpleasant smells. Smelly compost is an indicator that it needs turning.

Step 6: When it is ready, your finished compost should look and smell like rich soil. Now you can put it to use to feed your garden, flowers, lawn and potted plants.



What should go in my backyard compost bin?

Greens: Fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags, fresh grass clippings and plant scraps.



Browns: Dead leaves, dry grass clippings, egg shells and shredded newspaper.

Chopped up pieces work best!



What should *not* go in my backyard compost?

Bones, meat, eggs (egg shells are okay), oils, cheese and other dairy products should be kept out of your backyard compost bin. Excrement from dogs and cats should also be kept out. "Compostable" products, like plant-based plastics, are NOT designed for backyard composters.

How do I use finished compost?

Flowers and vegetables

Work half an inch of mature compost into the top six inches of the soil with a garden fork or rototiller. Be sure that the soil isn't sodden with water as this can result in an "adobe effect" when it dries, which adversely affects the plants.

Perennials

Use compost as mulch to gradually improve the soil. Apply it an inch or so deep between the plants.

Seedlings or Potted Flowers

Use 20% mature compost in the soil mix (if the mix you purchased doesn't already contain compost or worm castings).



Lawn

Sprinkle $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of fine compost evenly across the grass. This will improve the lawn's ability to use fertilizers more efficiently so that less is needed in the future. If you do fertilize your lawn, consider using one of the natural products based on recycled dried poultry wastes (often listed as DPW on the ingredient list) rather than synthetic chemicals.

Indoor Plants

Add small handfuls to the surface of the soil inside the pots. It will break down over time and provide nutrients as it decomposes.



Why compost?

Compost creates healthy soil by:

- suppressing plant diseases and pests
- reducing or eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers
- promoting higher yields of agricultural crops



Compost saves water by:

- improving water holding capacity and erosion control
- improving drainage and permeability

Composting fights climate change.

When landfilled, organic materials like food, yard waste and paper release methane, a greenhouse gas that traps 84 times more heat in our atmosphere than carbon dioxide (over the short term). Composting prevents these methane emissions, making it one of the easiest actions a community can take to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.



Composting at the Longmont Drop-Off Center

These materials shouldn't go in your backyard compost, but they ARE accepted in the Waste Diversion Center's Compost Bin during staffed hours:

- meat, bone and dairy
- products that are certified compostable by BPI



Longmont Waste Diversion Center 140 Martin St.

Staffed hours:

April 15 – Oct 14: 8:30 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.
Oct 15 – April 14: 7:30 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

These services are available for Longmont residents only. Please bring your utility bill indicating you are a city trash subscription customer.

For full guidelines for composting at the Waste Diversion Center, visit

www.ecocycle.org/yourcommunity/longmont

For more on composting, including how to winterize your bin and how to compost with worms, visit

www.ecocycle.org/compost.

City of Longmont

www.ci.longmont.co.us/solidwaste

303-651-8416

Eco-Cycle

www.ecocycle.org

303-444-6634



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at the same time.



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