



BACKYARD COMPOSTING

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The background is a solid green color with several white butterfly silhouettes scattered across it. The butterflies are of various sizes and orientations, some appearing to fly towards the center and others away from it. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
CITY OF DALLAS
FOR OUR COMPOST BINS**

KATIE CARLIN-CITY OF DALLAS



WHAT IS COMPOST?

CREATED BY THE
DECOMPOSITION OF MATERIALS
AROUND YOUR HOME SUCH AS
LEAVES, GRASS CLIPPINGS,
VEGETABLE AND FOOD SCRAPS
AND COFFEE GROUNDS

COMPOSTING METHODS

- MANAGED/PASSIVE
- HOT/COLD

COMPOSTING

- COLD METHOD/PASSIVE
 - RANDOM PILE
 - TRENCH COMPOSTING
 - COLD METHOD/MANAGED
 - VERMICOMPOSTING
- HOT METHOD/MANAGED
 - INDORE METHOD

VERMICOMPOSTING

COMPOSTING WITH WORMS



COLD COMPOSTING/PASSIVE

- RANDOM PILE
- TRENCH COMPOSTING

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOT COMPOSTING

- MATERIALS
- MOISTURE
- AIR
- VOLUME
- TIME

CHEMICAL PROCESS



- FOOD SOURCE (CARBON)
- ENERGY SOURCES
 - NITROGEN
 - OXYGEN
 - MOISTURE

MATERIALS

- GREENS
- BROWNS

GREEN MATERIALS



- RICH IN NITROGEN
 - GRASS CLIPPINGS
 - FOOD SCRAPS
 - FRUIT WASTES
 - COFFEE GROUNDS
 - ROTTED MANURES

BROWN MATERIALS

- MATERIALS CONTAINING CARBON
 - LEAVES
 - SAW DUST
 - PAPER
 - CARDBOARD
 - STRAW & HAY



CARBON / NITROGEN RATIO

DECOMPOSITION INCREASED BY CREATING
THE PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN THE CARBON
MATERIALS (CALLED BROWNS) AND THE
NITROGEN RICH MATERIALS (CALLED GREENS)

IDEAL RATIO OF MATERIALS

- GENERALLY ONE PART GREEN AND TWO PARTS BROWN WILL ACHIEVE YOUR DESIRED RATIO
- BY WEIGHT, EQUAL PARTS OF GREENS AND BROWNS
- GRASS CLIPPINGS ARE GENERALLY HEAVY-1 PART GRASS CLIPPINGS TO 3 PARTS LEAVES

PARTICLE SIZE

- DECOMPOSITION OCCURS ALONG THE EDGES OF MATERIAL
- MORE SURFACE AREA AVAILABLE THE FASTER THE COMPOSTING
- SMALL IS BETTER

MATERIALS TO AVOID

- INVASIVE WEEDS
- WOOD ASHES (pH PROBLEM)
- BBQ CHARCOL
- CAT, DOG OR HUMAN FECES
- LIME
- PLANT MATERIALS WHICH HAVE BEEN SPRAYED WITH PESTICIDES, HERBICIDES OR FUNGICIDES
- SAW DUST FROM TREATED LUMBER
- GREASE, MEAT, BONES & DIARY PRODUCTS



VOLUME

GENERALLY A CUBIC YARD GIVES THE
OPTIMUM RESULTS FOR THE BACKYARD
COMPOSTER

MOISTURE

- ABOUT 40% MOISTURE IN A COMPOST BIN (?)
- MOIST AS A WRUNG-OUT SPONGE



TIME

TIME IS WHAT COMPOSTING IS ALL ABOUT. ORGANIC MATERIAL WILL DECOMPOSE WITH NO HELP FROM US. WE ARE JUST TRYING TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS FROM A FEW YEARS TO A FEW WEEKS.





BACKYARD COMPOSTERS

MOST EFFICIENT PILE SIZES FOR
THE BACKYARD COMPOSTER
RANGE FROM 3'X3'X3' TO 5'X5'X5'



AT WHAT DEGREE ARE WEED SEEDS AND GERMS DESTROYED?

DEPENDING ON THE SOURCE OF YOUR
INFORMATION, IT CAN RANGE FROM 140
DEGREES UP TO 150 DEGREES.



BUILDING YOUR COMPOST PILE THE INDORE METHOD


- LAYERING METHOD
- BROWN MATERIALS
- GREEN MATERIALS
- ADD MOISTURE TO LAYERS
- START AND END WITH BROWN

TURNING THE PILE

- PILE WILL STABILIZE AT 140 TO 160 DEGREES FOR A FEW DAYS
- WHEN TEMPERATURE BEGINS TO DECLINE, TURN THE PILE
- CREATES AIR FLOW AND WILL CAUSE THE PILE TO HEAT UP AGAIN
- THE HOTTER THE PILE, THE FASTER THE COMPOST

PILE VOLUME



- THE VOLUME OF YOUR PILE WILL BE REDUCED BY 50% AT YOUR FIRST TURN
 - THE VOLUME OF YOUR PILE WILL ONCE AGAIN BE REDUCED BY 50% ON YOUR SECOND TURN.
 - YOUR FINAL COMPOST VOLUME WILL BE APPROXIMATELY ONE-FOURTH OF THE ORIGINAL VOLUME OF THE PILE.
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WHY TURN THE PILE?

- SPEEDS UP THE COMPOSTING PROCESS
- REHEATS THE PILE TO KEEP IT IN AN AREOBIC STATE
- CREATES NEW CHANNELS FOR AIR AND MOISTURE TO MOVE THROUGH
- ELIMINATES ODORS AND MATTING

HOW TO TURN THE PILE

- USE GARDEN FORK TO THOROUGHLY TURN THE INNER SECTION
- TRY TO MOVE THE EDGE MATERIALS TO THE INNER CORE
- ADD MOISTURE AS NEEDED
- TURN EVERY 7 TO 10 DAYS FOR THE FIRST 4 TO 8 WEEKS



HOW SOON CAN I HAVE MY FIRST BATCH OF COMPOST?

USING THE HOT COMPOSTING METHOD—AS
LITTLE AS THREE TO FOUR WEEKS

WHEN IS THE COMPOST READY?

- IT SMELLS EARTHY-NOT SOUR, PUTRID OR LIKE AMONIA
- IT NO LONGER HEATS UP AFTER IT HAS BEEN TURNED OR DAMPENED
- IT HAS A CRUMBLEY TEXTURE AND LOOKS LIKE DARK SOIL



HARVESTING COMPOST

SIFT THROUGH A 1-INCH SQUARE SCREEN



COMMON PROBLEMS IN COMPOST PILES

STINKS

NOT HEATING-UP

IT STINKS!

- SOUR SMELL

- TOO WET
- ADD CARBON
- TURN

- AMMONIA SMELL

- TOO MUCH NITROGEN
- ADD MORE CARBON
- TURN

IT SMELLS SWEET!

- PILE TOO SMALL
 - ADD MORE NITROGEN
 - TURN THE PILE



THE COMPOST PILE IS NOT GETTING HOT

NITROGEN

MOISTURE

COMPOST ACTIVATORS

- USE WHEN YOU ARE SHORT ON GREEN MATERIALS
- PROVIDES EXTRA FOOD FOR THE BACTERIA

MOST COMMON COMPOST ACTIVATORS

- COTTON SEED MEAL
- ALFALFA MEAL
- DRIED MOLASSES
- HOUSEHOLD SUGAR

- MANURES, SUCH AS
 - CHICKEN
 - COW
 - GOAT
 - RABBIT



PESTS

- ANIMALS

- RACOONS
- OPOSSUMS
- RATS



- FOOD SCRAPS

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- REMOVE ALL MEAT, BONES, DAIRY PRODUCTS & FATS

- INSECTS

- GNATS
- FLIES
- ANTS

- FOOD SCRAPS

- REMOVE OR BURY ALL FOOD SCRAPS
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WHERE SHOULD I PUT MY COMPOST BIN?

- YOU NEED ADEQUATE AIR CIRCULATION AROUND THE BIN
- OUT OF THE FULL SUN PREVENTS EXCESS HEAT BUILD UP IN PLASTIC BINS ESPECIALLY DRAINING THE MOISTURE
- PLACE ON BARE GROUND FOR EASE OF DRAINAGE
- AWAY FROM LARGE TREES-ROOTS STEAL NUTRIENTS
- AWAY FROM WOODEN STRUCTURES SUSCEPTIBLE TO ROT

USES OF COMPOST

- TO PLANT A LAWN OR GARDEN MIX 1 TO 2 INCHES OF COMPOST INTO THE TOP SIX INCHES OF SOIL
- USE TO MAINTAIN YOUR LAWN OR GARDEN BY SPRINKLING IN UP TO ½ INCH ANNUALLY
- CONTROL EROSION BY COVERING BARE AREAS
- ADDS NUTRIENTS TO POTTING SOIL

WHAT IS MULCH?

- MATERIAL THAT IS USED TO PROTECT THE SOIL AND TO INHIBIT WEED GROWTH
- GOOD MULCHES:
 - WOOD CHIPS
 - LEAVES
 - GRASS CLIPPINGS
 - COMPOST

MULCHING BENEFITS



- PREVENTS EROSION
- SUPPRESSES WEEDS
- RETAINS SOIL MOISTURE
- MODERATES SOIL TEMPERATURE
- ADDS NUTRIENTS TO THE SOIL AS THE MATERIALS BREAK DOWN

HOW TO USE MULCH

- ADD A 3 TO 4 INCH LAYER CIRCLING YOUR TREES SHRUBS AND GARDEN PLANTS
- DO NOT PILE AGAINST TRUNK OF STEM
- PREVENTS PLANT DISEASES AND PESTS
- USE LONG-LASTING MULCHES-WOOD CHIPS AND WOOD SHAVINGS

CREATE A SELF-MULCHING LAWN

- MOW GRASS AT 2 TO 4 INCHES TALL
- CUT OFF ONLY THE TOP THIRD OF THE GRASS BLADE
- USE A MULCHING MOWER TO CHOP UP THE CLIPPINGS
- THE LAWN MOWER IS THE BEST MULCHING AND COMPOSTING TOOL FOR LEAVES ALSO

MULCHING BASICS

- COVER ALL BARE GROUND WITH A MULCH
- A LAYER OF 3 INCHES OR MORE WILL HELP WITH WEED CONTROL
- USE CARDBOARD OR NEWSPAPER AS A WEED BARRIER UNDER MULCH TO KILL GRASS RATHER THAN CHEMICALS

MULCHING BASICS (CONTINUED)

- USE LEAVES AS A BLANKET TO PROTECT PLANTS IN THE SPRING AND FALL FROM THE COLD
- SPREAD MULCHES UNDER ANNUALS AFTER THEY ARE ESTABLISHED
- WATER THE GROUND BEFORE AND AFTER APPLYING MULCH
- KEEP MULCH MOIST BY WATERING