

earthfirst[®]

as nature intended



HOW TO HOME COMPOST

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If you already sort materials for recycling – composting is very much the same. It is just different materials!

MATERIALS | WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Outside

1 | Stationary Compost Bin – available at any home & garden or hardware store. It should be under \$100 or €100.



2 | Heavy Wire



Inside

1 | Compost Collection Containers – with or without lid depending on how frequently you will transfer to your bin. A bucket with handle also works well. *No special container is needed – you likely have something usable in your home.*



2 | Container for Water – with a lid is helpful to prevent spilling. *No special container is needed.*



BIN PLACEMENT

STEP 1 Place the composting bin on the ground and at a spot that will drain away moisture

- Garden, grass or dirt areas are ideal
- Liquids are an expected outcome of degrading materials and of course the addition of water
- Placement is not recommended on paved surfaces including walkways and parking lots for the reason above

BIN PROTECTION | WIRE SCREENING

STEP 2 Place cut heavy grade wire screening at the compost output areas to discourage entry

- This is a safety guard against any small animals that may be looking for a safe place to forage or stay
- *If you live in bear country – and have bear safe garbage bins – home compost bins are not recommended due to easy access. Please contribute your food waste to a municipal composter*



BIN PROTECTION | SECURE TO THE GROUND

STEP 3 Secure your bin more securely to the ground at least two of the compost output areas

- Tent stakes work well



BIN PREPARATION | SOIL BASE

STEP 4 As your first input – add soil and yard waste

- 3 to 4 buckets or enough to create a few inches of base.
- Soil and waste from your yard or garden is best as it inherently contains a support system – namely microbes and worms
- Leaves, grass clippings, pine needles, small twigs are all acceptable
- Purchased soil and soil amendments also work



ADD ORGANIC WASTE

STEP 5 Add Organic Waste

- PRODUCE
 - Peels - Banana, apple, peach, carrot, potato, etc.
 - Rinds – all citrus, melons, avocado, etc.
 - Stems - bell pepper stems, herb, cherry
 - Cores – apple, tomato
 - Coffee grounds, loose tea leaves – *no tea or coffee filters or bags*
 - Rice | Grains | Legumes | Nuts – cooked or dried
 - *Any expired, molded, petrified produce*

- LARGE ITEMS. It is helpful to break down rinds of watermelon and pumpkin for example. Break corn cobs into two+ pieces. Realize this is intuitive. It helps a more even degradation.
- DAIRY
 - Only egg shells!
- PLU LABELS. Remove PLU labels from fruits and vegetables! *When compostable PLU labels are widely in use – you will be able to leave on the produce.*

NO ANIMAL PROTEIN OR BONES! This prevents against curious carnivore animals!



ADD BROWNS | YARD WASTE

STEP 6 Add Browns

- Grass clippings, leaves, small twigs, etc. are necessary layering materials in at least the same proportion
 - A greater proportion of browns is good



BIN INPUTS | WATER

STEP 7 Add Water

- Pour water over the compost inputs
 - Moisture is a great contributing element to degradation



CYCLE STEPS

REPEAT STEPS 5 – 7 throughout your peak compost season

HARVEST COMPOST

STEP 8 Harvest Compost

Compost's return to soil serves as a carbon bank - helping to store carbon thereby removing it from the atmosphere.

- From bin output areas – pull the decomposed organic material known as compost
 - A hand tool is helpful
- Add as a soil amendment on top of gardens
 - Rain and watering will impart nutrients to the soil

COMPOST SEASONS

United States

- Your geography's heat season is the best guide
 - South, Southeast and Southwest are great year-round compost environments
 - North, Northeast, Northwest and Midwest Summers are best
- Home Compost processes will function well within the hottest months of the year
 - Pause home composting for cool and cold months – compost will not degrade
- Consider contributing to community composting in winter months

Europe

- Your geography's heat season is the best guide
 - Malta, Greece, Spain's Andalucia, Rome and any geographies South are best during the hottest months of the year
- Home Compost processes will function well within the hottest months of the year
 - Pause for cool and cold months – compost will not degrade
- Consider contributing to community composting in winter months

MAINTENANCE

- Pull any visible contamination – produce labels, salad dressing sachets from salad kits, fruit and avocado pits are common items which will not break down
- It is common for plants to grow within the bin. Either plant or donate to a gardener. You can also pull and discard on top of inputs as garden waste.