

COMPOSTING

NATURE'S WAY OF RECYCLING

Composting is a natural process that breaks down organic materials into a dark, earthy, soil-like material. Putting compost on your lawn and garden adds nutrients to help plants grow.

LET NATURE DO THE WORK FOR YOU

Composting is a great way to recycle your kitchen scraps and yard trimmings, reduce your trash output and generate a free, rich soil conditioner.

Compost is typically used as mulch for your lawn and garden areas prior to planting, or as a component in potting mixes.

By composting, you are helping Wawa reduce the amount of trash sent to our landfill, which reduces greenhouse gases and saves natural resources.

BENEFITS:

- Reduce trash
- Grow healthy, vibrant plants
- Reduce chemical use
- Protect groundwater
- Save money

BASIC INGREDIENTS:



ORGANIC MATERIALS



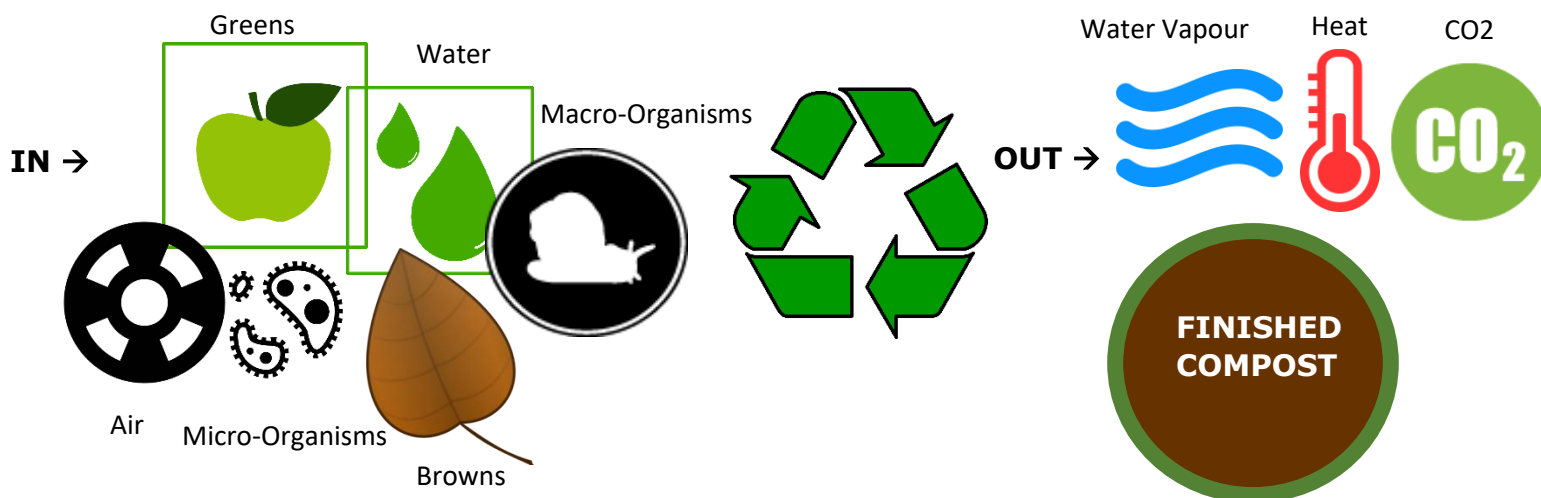
WATER



AIR

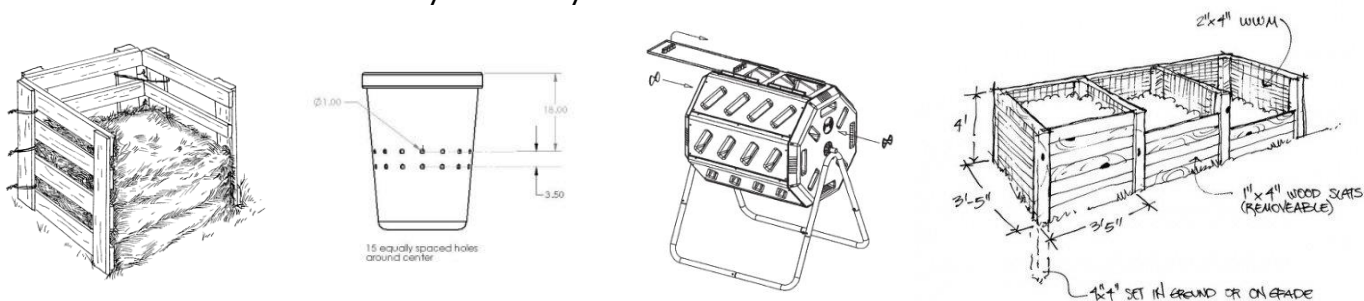
HOW DOES COMPOSTING WORK?

- Add nitrogen-rich greens and carbon rich browns to your compost pile.
- Add water and "turn" materials
- Micro-organisms that you can't see (such as bacteria and fungi) and macro-organisms you can see (such as earth worms and other insects) consume and break down material.
- With enough air and water, the micro-organisms will produce heat.
- Hot compost decomposes faster than cold compost. If there is not enough water and oxygen, the micro-organisms will die resulting in a slow rate of decomposition.
- The carbon dioxide released in your backyard compost is significantly less harmful for the environment than the methane produces by organics in a landfill.



HOW TO GET STARTED:

- First, decide if you want a compost pile (a small area of the yard where you mix your ingredients) or a fabricated compost bin or tumbler.
- Generally, a bin or enclosed pile is recommended to discourage pests and make it easier to access the finished compost.
- There are many commercially produced compost bins, or you can build your own from numbers plans available online.
- The ideal bin size is 3 feet by 3 feet by 3 feet.



HOW TO MAKE COMPOST:

1. Each time you add materials to your pile, add roughly one share of nitrogen-rich greens and three shares of carbon rich browns.
2. Place materials in your compost pile, pre-made compost bin or tumbler.
3. Add some water (ex. By rinsing out your kitchen compost collector) and mix. Make sure your pile has enough air and water. The mixture should not be more moist than a wrung out sponge.
4. Turn or mix occasionally and allow decomposition to occur for a few months. Your consistency will influence your results.

| Turning | Finished Compost |
|--------------|------------------|
| Once a week | 3 - 4 months |
| Bi-weekly | 4 - 6 months |
| Once a Month | 8 - 12 months |

WHAT TO PLACE IN YOUR COMPOSTER BIN:

"IF IT GROWS, IT GOES!"

NITROGEN-RICH MATERIALS – "THE GREENS"

Vegetable/Fruit Peelings and Scraps: (Onion skins, potato peelings, lettuce, corn cobs, apple cores, banana peels, citrus peels, spoiled veggies and fruits, etc.)

Inedible Food Leftovers: (Clean and crushed eggs shells, stale bread, burned toast, oatmeal, potato chips, cereal, cookies etc.)

Tea and Coffee Scraps: (Tea bags and leaves, coffee grounds, filters, etc.)

Fresh Grass Clippings and Plants: Houseplant trimmings, Spanish moss

CARBON-RICH MATERIALS – “THE BROWNS”

Dead or dried grass clippings: (fallen leaves, dead or dried flowers, etc.)

Wood Chips, Straw and Hay: (Wooden toothpicks, sawdust, pencil shavings etc.)

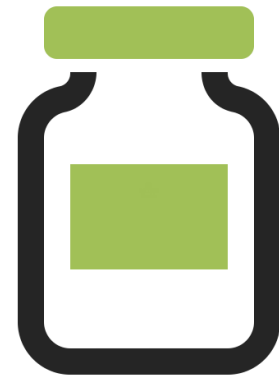
Paper: (Paper bags, napkins, towels and tissues, newspapers, comics, tickets, cards, envelopes, receipts, paper notes, computer paper, cardboard etc.)

Natural Fibers: (Lint from clothes dryer, dust bunnies from under the bed, wool socks, vacuum cleaner bag contents, cotton swabs, cotton balls, etc.)

***REMEMBER: THE SMALLER THE PIECES, THE FASTER YOUR COMPOST WILL DECOMPOSE!**

WHAT NOT TO PLACE IN YOUR COMPOST BIN OR PILE:

- All meat, poultry and fish products or bones
- Dairy products
- Very greasy and oily food
- Anything not biodegradable (plastic, metal, glass)
- Big, chunky wood material
- Glossy paper
- Weeds or invasive plants
- Etc.



HOW TO KNOW IF IT'S READY:

THE JAR TEST

- Put some food in a jar, add water to make it soggy, and seal the jar tightly. Leave it alone for a week, then open the jar carefully. Check for odor. If it smells like wet earth, then the compost is done.
- Finished compost is dark brown or black and crumbly with a rich earthy smell. Using compost in the late summer or fall is ideal so that you can make room in your compost bin for fall leaves.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Below are some common composting problems and how to fix them:

Symptom: Bad Odor **Problem:** not enough air, too little browns **Solution:** Turn/mix the compost and add more browns

Symptom: Pile smells ok, but is not decomposing **Problem:** Not enough water, too little greens **Solution:** Moisten pile, turn material and add more greens

Symptom: Liquid is leaking out of the bottom of the bin **Problem:** Too much water. Materials should be damp like a wrung-out sponge

Symptom: Compost not breaking down properly **Problem:** Materials too big

Solution: Cut materials into smaller pieces

