



DIY COMPOST BIN

Overview: Following a procedure and understanding the decomposition process. Composting allows for making environmentally and economically conscious decisions.

Benefits of Composting:

- Less waste sent to the landfill
- Save money on fertilizer for your garden
- Enrich your garden's soil
- Save money on trash bags and disposal costs
- Reduce emissions from waste transportation
- Repurpose yard waste and food scraps

Materials:

- 5-gallon bucket (or large trash can) with a lid
- Green materials (see last page)
- Brown materials (see last page)
- Rich soil from your yard (worms are a plus)
- Drill with a 1/4-1/2 inch drill bit
- Water
- Shaded, well drained area
- Small shovel or hoe

Procedure:

Compost Bin Assembly

1. Using a 1/4-1/2 inch drill bit, drill 12 holes in the bottom and 6 holes in the lid of your 5-gallon bucket, and approximately 12 holes around the sides. Make sure all holes are evenly spaced (2-3 inches apart) so that there is adequate aeration.
2. Wash the bucket and lid. Be sure to safely dispose of any plastic remnants from drilling the holes.

Note: (1) Instead of a well-drained area, you can place the bin in another 5-gallon bucket to catch any excess liquid from your compost. (2) If using a large trash can, drilling more holes will help increase aeration. (3) In events of heavy or prolonged rain, cover your compost bin to reduce excess hydration.

Filling the Compost Bin

1. Add a layer of wet leaves.
2. Add a thin layer of soil from your yard
3. Add a layer of dry shredded newspaper
4. Add a layer of dry leaves
5. Add your green material (see last page)
6. Add another thin layer of soil
7. Add another layer of dry shredded newspaper
8. Add another layer of dry leaves
9. Add a layer of wet shredded newspaper
10. Add another thin layer of soil
11. Add another layer of dry leaves
12. Add another layer of wet shredded newspaper
13. Be sure that the lid is sealed tightly
14. Gently roll the compost bin on its side to mix the layers
15. Place in a shaded area and you're done!

Note: (1) Wet the leaves and shredded newspaper in a bucket or add water to the compost bin with a hose. (2) The order of these layers is not critical, as long as you maintain a 3 to 1 ratio of brown and green material and bury the food scraps under a few layers of brown material to deter animals.



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Maintaining Your Compost Bin:

- Add food scraps and mix compost every 7-10 days, maintaining a 3 to 1 ratio
 - Keep scraps in another container or bag until ready to add to bin
 - Avoid using materials with applied chemicals including herbicide, fungicide, and insecticide.
- When the compost is ready to harvest, it will be dense and dark, and most of the material will be broken down; however, it will not look like perfectly ground soil.
 - Add a handful to each hole when planting or mix with top 4 inches of soil approximately one month before planting

Note: The level of maintaining a compost bin depends on the individual. The steps above are suggestions, and if it seems overwhelming and things are not working out, just remember that compostable materials will break down eventually, even if they are left alone. Try your best and know that your efforts are helping reduce waste!

Dos and Don'ts of Composting:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a high brown material to green material ratio to reduce odors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill your bin with only one material type
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place your bin in a shaded or covered area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave your bin in direct sunlight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the moisture levels at ~50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave your compost bin out in cold temperatures (lower than 45°F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury chopped food scraps ~6 inches down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put full fruits and vegetables in the bin

Troubleshooting:

Problem	Cause	Solution
Ants present in compost	-Compost is too dry	-Add water to dampen the pile
Strong foul odor	-Low brown to green material ratio -Not enough air flow -Pile is too wet	-Add more brown material -Mix compost regularly -Add more DRY brown material
Attracting rodents or animals	-Food scraps at the top of bin -Wrong materials	-Bury food scraps 6" down -Remove bones, meat, etc.
Attracting fruit flies	-Banana peels (larvae live on bananas and other fruits)	-If indoors, move the bin outside -Build a trap using a plastic container with holes in the lid and a banana peel inside. Place the trap near the bin, not inside. -If outdoors, add more brown material and bury food scraps
Attracting fungus gnats	-Fungus and moisture	-If indoors, remove the lid and let the top layer dry out. Be sure to keep the lower layers moist to maintain composting conditions

BE SURE TO WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER HANDLING YOUR COMPOST!

Questions? Feel free to reach out to Kyla Isakson at programming@warehamlandtrust.org.

For more information about The Wareham Land Trust's properties, programs, and online resources, visit our website <http://warehamlandtrust.org/>.

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WHAT GOES IN THE COMPOST BIN?

YES- GREEN

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds and tea bags
- Grass clippings

YES- BROWN

- Dry leaves
- Newspaper
- Coffee filters

NO

- Bones, meat/seafood, fats, or grease
- Peanut butter or other oils
- Dairy products
- Bread or grains
- Branches, weeds, diseased plants, or materials with applied chemicals
- Compostable containers or utensils
- Magazines or other paper products with colored ink or plastic coatings
- Cardboard
- Animal waste
- Cooked foods or leftovers

PILE LAST TURNED

PILE LAST TURNED			
Start Date:			

Note: Different bins can handle different items to compost. I wanted to start small with my compost bin, so some items that can be composted were omitted based on my capacity. If you would like to start a larger compost bin, do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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