



**Made in New Zealand for W.C. Redmon
Company of Peru, Indiana USA**

www.RedmonUSA.com

A Composting Introduction

Composting is the decomposition of plant remains and other organic materials to make an earthy, dark, crumbly substance that is excellent for adding to houseplants or enriching garden soil. It is the way to recycle your yard and kitchen waste, and is an important step in reducing the volume of garbage needlessly sent to landfills for disposal.

In the natural world, composting is what happens as leaves pile up on the forest floor and begin to decay. Eventually, the decomposed leaves are returned to the soil, where living roots can finish the recycling process by reclaiming the nutrients from the decomposed leaves.

Today, with landfill space becoming scarce and expensive and people becoming more aware of the impact that landfill sites have on the environment, the use of composting to turn organic waste into valuable resource is expanding rapidly.

You can contribute to the 'composting revolution' by composting your own garden and kitchen wastes at home.

Composting Fundamentals

Good composting is a matter of providing the proper environmental conditions for microbial life. Compost is made by billions of microbes (fungi, bacteria, etc.) that digest the garden and kitchen wastes (food) you provide for them. Keep in mind the following basic ideas while building your compost pile:

Air

Composting microbes are *aerobic* -- they can't do their work well unless they are provided with air. Without air, *anaerobic* (non-air needing) microbes take over the pile

and will tend to smell like putrefying garbage! Ingredients, such as straw, don't mat down easily and are very helpful in allowing air into the center of a pile. Turning the pile will help air circulation.

Water

Ideally, your pile should be moist to fit the needs of compost microbes. At this moisture level, there is a thin film of water coating every particle in the pile, making it very easy for microbes to live and disperse themselves throughout the pile. If you are using dry ingredients, such as autumn leaves or straw, you'll need to moisten them as you add them to the pile. Kitchen fruit and vegetable waste generally have plenty of moisture, as do fresh green grass clippings.

Food

In broad terms, there are two major kinds of food that composting microbes digest '**Browns**' and '**Greens**'.

'**Browns**' are dry and dead plant materials such as straw, dry brown weeds, autumn leaves, and wood chips or sawdust. These items are a source of energy for the compost microbes but because they tend to be dry, browns often need to be moistened before they are put into a compost system.

'**Greens**' are fresh (and often green) plant materials such as green weeds from the garden, kitchen fruit and vegetable scraps, green leaves, coffee grounds and tea bags, fresh manure, etc. Compared to browns, greens have more nitrogen in them. Nitrogen is a critical element in amino acids and proteins, and can be thought of as a protein source for the billions of multiplying microbes. A good mix of browns and greens is the best nutritional balance for the microbes. This mix also helps out with the aeration and amount of water in the pile. Browns, for instance, tend to be bulky and promote good aeration.

Greens, on the other hand, are typically high in moisture, and balance out the dry nature of the browns.

Other Things to Consider

In a cold climate, your compost pile will probably go dormant in the winter. No problem -- it'll start back up again when the springtime thaw comes. If you have good aeration and moisture, and the proper ingredient mix, your pile will decompose at temperatures of 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) or above.

Location

Position your compost bin in a warm and easy accessible location in your garden. Place your compost bin on bare soil with good drainage. Your compost bin has been designed with three anchoring lugs per side - be sure to press these firmly into the ground to gain maximum stability.

Earthworms

Earthworms do a great job in your compost bin. Adding 1000 earthworms to your composting pile will speed up the process. Earthworms burrow through your compost thus promoting the generation of microbes. They also aerate the compost heap as well as leaving behind their castings.

Earthworms will continue to breed as long as new material is added to the pile. Another advantage for having earthworms in your compost bin, is that when the compost is transferred to your garden, some worms will be transferred at the same time which will help to the integration of the compost with the soil and help to break up soil throughout your garden.

What to Compost

A great variety of things can be composted at home, saving them from a trip to the landfill.

The following items can be added to your compost pile:

Grass / Lawn Clippings

When adding grass clippings be careful to add very thin layers, or thoroughly mix them in with other compost ingredients, as they otherwise tend to become slimy and matted down, excluding air from the pile. Fresh grass clippings are high in nitrogen, making them a 'green' compost ingredient.

Kitchen Waste

Fruit and vegetable peels / rinds, tea bags, coffee grounds, eggshells, and similar materials are great stuff to compost. They tend to be high in nitrogen (this puts them in the 'greens' category), and are usually quite soft and moist. As such, kitchen wastes need to be mixed in with drier / bulkier materials to allow complete air penetration. Avoid composting meat scraps, fatty food wastes, milk products, and bones -- these materials can attract vermin.

Leaves

Generally, leaves are an excellent compost ingredient, but they can mat down and exclude air. Be sure that any clumps are thoroughly broken up, or that the leaves are used only in thin layers. Dead leaves are in the 'browns' category, while living green leaves contain abundant nitrogen and are considered 'greens'.

Manure

Horse, cow, sheep, and poultry manure's. They can burn plants if applied when fresh, so be sure they get well composted. Manure's typically contain nitrogen (the fresher the manure, the more nitrogen it contains) and are considered a 'green' ingredient. Some manure may contain weed seeds. Fresh manure's can get a compost pile to heat up quickly, and will accelerate the decomposition of woody materials, autumn leaves, and other 'browns'.

Straw

Dry straw is a good material for helping to keep a compost pile aerated, because it tends to create lots of passageways for air to get into the pile. Be sure to wet the straw, as it is very slow to decompose otherwise. Straw is a 'brown' and also requires mixture with 'greens' to break down quickly.

Weeds and Other Garden Waste

Many types of weeds and old garden plants can be composted. Avoid weeds that have begun to go to seed, as seeds may survive the composting process.

Wood Chips and Sawdust

Wood products belong in the 'browns' category, because they are fairly low in nitrogen. Stir sawdust thoroughly into the pile or use very thin layers. Coarse wood chips will very slowly decay, and are probably better used as mulch.

What NOT to Compost

Whether because of toxins, plant diseases, or noxious weeds, there are some things that shouldn't be put into compost piles. Avoid composting the following materials:

Chemically-Treated Wood Products

Sawdust is often available from construction sites, friends, or your own building projects. If you are considering composting sawdust, be sure of the origin of the sawdust. Sawdust from chemically-treated wood products can contain chemicals and toxins.

Meat, Bones and Fatty Food Waste

These materials are very attractive to pests. In addition, fatty food wastes can be very slow to break down, because the fat can exclude the air that composting microbes need to do their work.

Noxious Weeds

Don't compost these weeds unless they are completely dead and dry (you may want to leave them in a sunny place for a couple of weeks before composting). Remember also that composting weeds that have gone to seed will create weeds in next year's garden.

Pet Waste

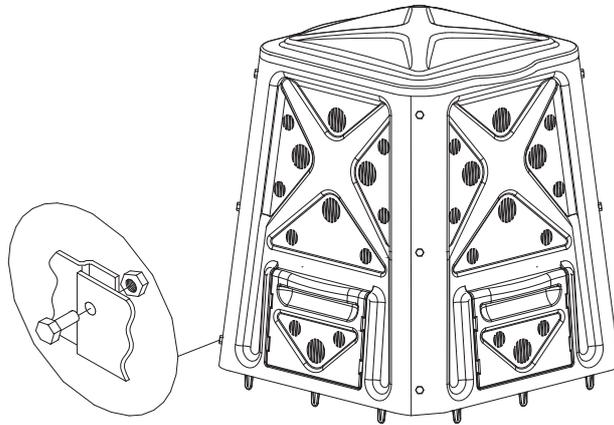
Dog and cat feces may carry diseases that can infect humans. It is best NEVER to use them in compost piles.

ASSEMBLY INSTRUCTIONS

PARTS SUPPLIED

- Side Panels - 4 only
- Door Panels - 4 only
- Lid - 1 only
- Nuts and Bolts - 12 sets
- Composting Guide - 1 only

WARNING: Make sure the panels overlap correctly as shown in the inset picture. Do not over tighten the nut.



Press the feet of the bin down into the earth to help anchor it, particularly when it is empty and in a windy area. If the ground is hard, press a spade into the earth, to create a "slot".