MINI-GUIDE

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

WHY COMPOST?

Backyard or home composting is a simple and practical way to manage your leaf and yard waste, as well as your fruit and vegetable scraps. Not only is it easy but it generates savings for you and your municipality, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills and associated costs.

Composting is also good for the environment. Landfilling organic wastes generates significant amounts of greenhouse gases and needlessly fills up our landfills. By composting these materials and using the compost produced, you will improve the health and fertility of your soil, helping your plants to grow nice and strong. This also completes the natural cycle of returning organic material to the soil. All this from your garbage!

Composting is a natural and biological recycling process in which microorganisms use oxygen to transform organic materials into a stable product, rich in humic compounds: compost.

Composting your organic materials at home is richly rewarding!

Say "Yes in my backyard!" and you'll see the benefits of using compost in your flower beds, your vegetable garden and on your lawn, saving money while doing something good for the planet.

Melbourne

BENEFITS OF COMPOST

Adding compost to your garden or lawn improves your soil's structure, enhancing drainage and stimulating plant growth. As well, compost provides plants with a slow-release source of nutrients and may help ward off unwanted pests and diseases.

Who said the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence?

SETTING UP YOUR HOME COMPOSTER

Choose a partially shaded area with good drainage where you can add water as needed.

Your compost bin should be accessible year round, even in winter! Although the composting process slows considerably when it's cold, you can still add materials to your compost bin. Activity will pick up again in the spring following stirring and, as needed, the addition of brown materials.

Found the perfect spot? To get started, lay a thin layer of twigs, wood chips or leaves at the bottom of the compost bin to promote aeration and drainage and then follow the recipe! If you have a rotating composter, you can skip this step.

THE RECIPE

Obtaining quality compost requires a balance between carbon-rich materials (like dead leaves) and nitrogen-rich materials (like food waste).

Good news: you have all the ingredients in your kitchen and garden!

1. **Put your nitrogen-rich vegetable materials like food waste in your composter**

2. **Add double the volume of dead leaves or other materials rich in carbon like straw or sawdust**

3. **Stir occasionally using a pitchfork or other tool to aerate and then let it rest**

Microorganisms and invertebrates in the soil will work to transform the matter into compost. Make sure they have enough air and water (but not too much) to do their work!

After about a year, you will obtain compost—a dark brown product that looks and smells like rich soil—to enrich your flowerbeds, vegetable gardens and lawn.

WHAT TO COMPOST

ORIGIN	COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS AT HOME	GREEN (NITROGEN-RICH) OR BROWN (CARBON-RICH) MATERIALS	TIPS AND TRICKS
IN THE KITCHEN AND THE HOME 	Fruit and vegetable waste (e.g., banana peels, apple cores, potato peels)	Green	Cooked, raw or even rotten, all vegetable waste can be composted! Don't add too many citrus peels all at once or any table scraps containing meat, fish or dairy products.
	Pasta, (without sauce), cereal (without milk), bread, crackers and rice	Brown	Don't worry about mold – it will help the decomposition!
	Coffee grounds and tea leaves	Brown	No need to remove the paper filter or the tea bags made of natural fibers.
	Nut shells (e.g., sunflower seeds or peanuts)	Brown	Avoid hard pits like peach or avocado pits that take too long to compost.
	Egg shells	—	But not the whole egg! Ideally in small amounts and crushed by hand.
	Paper towels, paper napkins and shredded newspaper	Brown	Newspaper can be a good source of carbon, but it's better to recycle it. Avoid glossy or wax paper.
	Wilted or dead indoor plants	Brown	With the soil but without the pot!
	Cooled fireplace or hardwood charcoal ashes	—	In small amounts only but you can also just spread them directly on the ground.
IN THE YARD AND GARDEN 	Grass clippings	Green	It is always better to practice grasscycling and leave the clippings on the lawn. If you have too many, let them dry before putting them in the compost bin.
	Garden waste	Brown	Including plant trimmings, weeds that have not gone to seed, wilted or dead plants, dried flowers, etc.
	Dead leaves	Brown	Conifer needles, rhubarb, oak and walnut leaves should be used in limited quantities.
IF AVAILABLE NEARBY	Straw Sawdust and wood chips	Brown	Straw, sawdust and untreated wood chips are excellent sources of carbon.

WHAT TO AVOID OR NOT TO COMPOST

Unlike industrial composting facilities, the temperature generally does not get high enough in a backyard compost bin to eliminate pathogens such as salmonella. This is why certain materials should be avoided in a home composter. As well, rodents, raccoons and skunks are especially attracted to meat and fatty materials such as cheese, cooking oil and dairy products. Avoid unwanted guests by not serving them a feast!

MATERIALS TO AVOID OR NOT TO COMPOST

- Dairy products (e.g., butter, milk, sour cream, yogurt)*
- Meat or fish bones and scraps as well as shellfish*
- Fats, grease, lard or oils (e.g. cooking oils, mayonnaise, salad dressing)*
- Diseased plants or leaves
- Invasive weeds or weeds that have gone to seed
- Human or pet wastes, soiled litter
- Treated wood
- Plants and trimmings contaminated with chemical pesticides or hazardous products
- Barbecue briquettes containing chemicals

* Check if these organics are accepted by your municipal curbside collection or drop-off composting program with the **Ça va où ?** App or your municipality's website.

THERE'S A SOLUTION FOR EVERY PROBLEM!

TOO DRY?

Add water or just remove the cover during a light rain. Add green waste

TOO WET?

Add dry brown materials and stir

UNPLEASANT ODOUR?

Add dry brown materials and stir

FLIES?

Cover food waste with newspaper, dead leaves, straw, sawdust or soil

TOO COMPACT?

Add coarse materials (woodchips) and stir

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