

## What to Place in Your Backyard Bin or Pile

On November 15, 2012, nationally observed as America Recycles Day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that food is now the single largest type of waste going to America's municipal landfills and incinerators. More than 33 million tons of food is wasted each year. When food is discarded in landfills, it produces methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change. Americans throw away up to 40 percent of their food, an average of 20 pounds per person a month. Much of this wasted food is actually surplus, wholesome and edible food that could have helped those in need. Food waste makes up about 12% of what is thrown away.



Composting is nature's way of recycling. Composting converts organic materials, including food scraps (like fruits and vegetables) and yard waste trimmings (like leaves, grass and small tree branches) into a dark, earthy-smelling soil conditioner, thereby preserving valuable nutrient-rich organic resources. Additionally, composting can save money by lowering disposal costs and replacing store-bought fertilizers. Compost also saves water by helping the soil hold moisture, reducing water runoff. Composting can make a significant contribution to achieving waste reduction goals, especially if organic waste comprises a large proportion of your waste stream.

If you are interested in developing an onsite composting bin, first check with your local community or county waste and recycling coordinator to identify any restrictions on outdoor composting. A properly constructed compost pile is needed to minimize nuisances (such as odors) and achieve a quality finished compost.

Composting is easy with some basic guidelines. To learn more about backyard composting and tips for success, watch SWANCC's video at [swancc.org](http://swancc.org).

## Acceptable Materials

### Greens: Nitrogen-Rich Materials

- Grass Clippings
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Bread and Grains
- Coffee Grounds and Filters
- Paper Tea Bags (no staple) or Loose Leaves
- Chicken, Rabbit, Cow or Horse Manure
- Hair and Fur

### Browns: Carbon-Rich Materials

- Leaves, Twigs and Small branches
- Shredded Paper and Cardboard Rolls
- Sawdust
- Hay and Straw
- Wood Chips
- Egg Shells
- Dried-out Flowers or Plants
- Nut Shells
- Ashes (wood burning fireplaces)
- Dryer and Vacuum Cleaner Lint
- Wool or Cotton Textiles

## Unacceptable Materials

### Do Not Add: Oils, Fats, Meats, Bones or Non-Biodegradable Materials

- Meat, Poultry or Fish Products and Bones
- Dairy Products
- Fats, Grease or Oils
- Pet Waste
- Soiled Diapers
- Plastic, Metal or Glass
- Charcoal Ash
- Large Wood Material
- Fire-starter Logs
- Treated or Painted Wood
- Waxed or Glossy Paper
- Synthetic Fibers
- Weeds, Diseased or Invasive Plants
- Black Walnut Tree Leaves or Twigs
- Yard Trimmings Treated with Chemical Pesticides
- Anything Not Biodegradable

Guidelines sourced from [epa.gov/compost](http://epa.gov/compost)

**Visit [swancc.org](http://swancc.org) for additional information.**



## Composting Resources

### *University of Illinois Extension*

University of Illinois Extension is the outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents of all of Illinois' 102 counties – and far beyond. Through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work, U of I Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer and more profitable for individuals and their communities.

[web.extension.illinois.edu/homecompost](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/homecompost)  
[web.extension.illinois.edu/state/hort.html](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/state/hort.html)

### *Cornell Cooperative Extension*

The Cornell Cooperative Extension puts research into practice by providing high value educational programs and university-backed resources that help solve real-life problems, transforming and improving New York families, farms, businesses and communities. *Compost: Truth or Consequences* video available.

[cce.cornell.edu](http://cce.cornell.edu)

### *U.S. Composting Council*

The U.S. Composting Council is involved in research, training, public education, composting and standards, expansion of compost markets and the enlistment of public support.

[compostingcouncil.org](http://compostingcouncil.org)

### *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Information regarding composting, along with the *Greenscaping Your Lawn and Garden* guide (#530-K-03-002).

[epa.gov/compost](http://epa.gov/compost)

### *Compost Guide*

[compostguide.com](http://compostguide.com)

### *Earth911*

[earth911.com](http://earth911.com)

### *Home Composting Made Easy*

Step by step instructions, products and resources for backyard composting  
[homecompostingmadeeasy.com](http://homecompostingmadeeasy.com)

### *How to Compost*

[howtocompost.org](http://howtocompost.org)

### *Master Composter*

[mastercomposter.com](http://mastercomposter.com)

## Books

### *Composting Inside and Out*

By Urban Worm Girl

[urbanwormgirl.com](http://urbanwormgirl.com)

### *Let It Rot: The Gardener's Guide to Composting*

by Stu Campbell

[storey.com](http://storey.com)

### *Worms Eat My Garbage* by Mary Applehoff

Flowerfield Enterprises, LLC

(269) 327-0108

[wormwoman.com](http://wormwoman.com)

## Workshops and Classes

### *Angelic Organics Learning Center*

Caledonia and Chicago

(815) 389-8455 or (773) 288-5462

[learngrowconnect.org](http://learngrowconnect.org)

### *Chicago Botanic Garden*

Glencoe

Have a composting question?

Call weekdays (847) 818-2901

or (847) 298-3502

[chicago-botanic.org](http://chicago-botanic.org)

### *Growing Power Urban Farm*

Milwaukee, WI

(414) 527-1546 or (773) 486-6005

[growingpower.org](http://growingpower.org)

### *Smart Farm*

Barrington

[smartfarms.org](http://smartfarms.org)

## Compost Related Products

### *Abundant Earth*

Can O' Worms worm bin

[abundantearth.com](http://abundantearth.com)

### *Compost Bins*

[compostbins.com](http://compostbins.com)

### *Compost Mania*

[compostmania.com](http://compostmania.com)

### *Green Cone*

[solarcone.net](http://solarcone.net)

(800) 807-6527

### *Master Gardening*

[mastergardening.com](http://mastergardening.com)

**Visit [swancc.org](http://swancc.org) for additional information.**



## Composting Ordinance by Community

Backyard composting may be regulated by your community. It is important to follow the requirements in your relative code.

### *Arlington Heights*

All compost shall be maintained using approved composting procedures for gardening and landscaping purposes. The Arlington Heights Park District is exempt from these requirements.

- All compost shall be located in a compost container as permitted in this Section, unless the sheet composting method is being utilized.
- No more than three compost containers shall be allowed on properties of ½ acre or less.
- Compost containers shall be located only in the side yard or rear yard. For properties of ½ acre or less, such containers must be placed a minimum of five feet from the property line or 25 feet from neighboring dwellings. For properties in excess of ½ acre, such containers must be located a minimum of 25 feet from neighboring dwellings. Where a side lot line is adjacent to a street, any compost container must adhere to the setback requirement for the principal structure.
- Items such as, but not limited to, the following organic materials are allowed in the compost pile: soil, grass clippings, waste sod, wood chips, shredded paper, egg shells, coffee grounds, straw, leaves, cooked and uncooked fruits and vegetables. Small amounts of activators may be added to facilitate the process.
- Compost shall not contain household garbage, meat or any meat product, fatty food, bones, animal feces, diseased plants, treated wood, manure, or non-plant materials.
- Compost shall be maintained to prevent the harboring and breeding of animals and offensive odors by frequent turning of the compost material to permit aeration.
- Newer composting techniques or devices may be permitted if they are reviewed and approved by the Director of Building and Health Services, with the advice of the Environmental Commission.

[vah.com/assets/1/village\\_code/CHAPTER\\_19\\_02-12\\_Revision.pdf](http://vah.com/assets/1/village_code/CHAPTER_19_02-12_Revision.pdf)

### *Barrington*

Compost piles/structures are allowable in the rear yard provided they are not within 10 feet of any property line.

### *Buffalo Grove*

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

### *Elk Grove Village*

Compostable materials such as grass, trimmings, wood waste, leaves, weeds and other garden refuse may be placed in a compost pile, provided it is placed in such a way so the material will not be windblown. The depositing of garbage, pet waste, meat scraps or other materials that may attract animals or vermin to the compost

pile, or which may produce an obnoxious odor, shall be prohibited.

Compost piles shall only be permitted in rear yards, except that portion of the rear yard wherein a drainage easement exists, and in no case shall a compost pile be located in any side yard. Compost piles shall be no more than five feet (5') in height, and shall not have a maximum ground or base area of more than one hundred (100) square feet. (Ord. 2121, 8-14-1990)

[sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book\\_id=636](http://sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=636)

### *Evanston*

Detached accessory buildings, structures and uses: Accessory buildings, structures or uses shall be permitted as provided in Table 4-A of this Section and detached accessory buildings, structures, or uses in a residential district shall:

- Cover no more than forty (40) percent of a rear yard when located in a rear yard. However, in no case shall the maximum lot coverage requirement for the zoning district be exceeded.
- Not be located in a side yard abutting a street or interior side yard between the principal structure and the side lot line.
- Not be located between the building line and the principal structure (except as permitted in front yards). Compost piles are permitted in rear yards in both residential and nonresidential districts.

[library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=14913&stateId=13&stateName=Illinois](http://library.municode.com/index.aspx?clientId=14913&stateId=13&stateName=Illinois)

### *Glencoe*

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

### *Glenview*

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

### *Hoffman Estates*

- Compost piles or bins may be located only in side or rear yards.
- Compost piles or bins cannot be placed or constructed in such a way so as to allow materials to be windblown.
- Compost piles or bins cannot emit odorous matter in such quantities as to be readily detectable at any point along lot lines, or so as to produce a public nuisance or hazard beyond lot lines.
- A large amount of grass clippings or branches next to a tree is not compost or mulch. There are several ways to construct compost piles and many types of composting bins are available at retail establishments. Piles should be placed on level ground in a sheltered, well-drained area, out of constant direct sunlight. However, they should not be placed in constantly shaded areas, such as under trees. Be considerate of your neighbors and choose a spot out of direct view.

[hoffmanestates.org/index.aspx?page=172&title=Garbage+&+Recycling&top=1&title=Garbage+&+Recycling](http://hoffmanestates.org/index.aspx?page=172&title=Garbage+&+Recycling&top=1&title=Garbage+&+Recycling)

### ***Inverness***

9-1-4: LAND POLLUTION, REFUSE DISPOSAL AND COMPOSTING:

C. Compost Piles: 1. Definitions: For the purposes of this subsection, the following definitions shall apply:

**COMPOST PILE:** The location on the property where composting occurs in a heap, bin or container, provided, however, a compost pile of less than two (2) cubic yards in volume shall not be subject to the regulations and requirements of this subsection. A manure pile shall also be construed to be a compost pile.

**COMPOSTING:** The process of turning organic waste materials into humus. Temperature, moisture, ventilation and quantity of organic materials are factors necessary to the process. Domestic sewage or septage shall not be used in the process of composting.

**HUMUS:** The finished product of composting to be used for enhancing or renovating the soil on the property on which it was produced.

2. Composting Conditions: It shall be unlawful to maintain a compost pile which:

- Emits a putrid or rancid odor; or
- Attracts or harbors flies, rats or vectors; or
- Consists of domestic sewage or septage, animal carcasses, cooking greases or petroleum products; or
- Is located within one hundred feet (100') of any residence or residential structure or within fifty feet (50') of any public or private right of way, whichever is more restrictive; or
- Is located within one hundred feet (100') of a watercourse, drainageway, flood plain, lake or pond; this provision shall not authorize a compost pile to leach or drain in the direction of said surface waters; or
- Exceeds twenty four (24) square yards in ground area or twenty four (24) cubic yards in volume. (Ord. 91-427, 10-8-1991)

[sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book\\_id=671](http://sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=671)

### ***Kenilworth***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

### ***Lincolnwood***

It shall be unlawful for any person to store any garbage, rubbish, junk or combustible refuse, except for the express purpose of having it collected by a duly authorized collector within a period not to exceed seven days. It shall be unlawful to place or permit to remain anywhere in the Village any building material, garbage or other material subject to decay, other than leaves or grass, or rubbish and other materials which can be blown away by the wind, except in a tightly covered, waterproof container or in a properly designed and used composting container or enclosure

[ecode360.com/15321885#15321885](http://ecode360.com/15321885#15321885)

### ***Morton Grove***

**Alternative Disposal Of Lawn/Landscape Waste:** In order to minimize the volume of landscape waste, residents are permitted to use alternative methods of disposing of landscape waste providing that alternative disposal is done as stipulated in this subsection.

- Residents are encouraged to use mulching mowers and side discharge mowers to minimize the volume of grass clippings

to be collected and processed under the village landscape waste collection program.

- Back yard composting bins are also allowable for landscape waste disposal provided the composting bins are constructed under the following guidelines:
  - a. a. Composting bins for the purposes of this chapter are defined as wire, wood or concrete block enclosures no larger than four feet (4') in diameter, and four feet (4') in height providing sufficient surface area for the controlled decomposition of landscape waste and other suitable organic material by aerobic bacteria.
  - b. b. Compost bins in residential neighborhoods shall be located only on private property in rear yards behind the rear building line and shall be located no closer than twenty five feet (25') to any other residential structure and at least three feet (3') from any side or rear lot line.
  - c. c. No person shall store or dispose of garbage in any residential compost bin in such a manner where odor is noticeable off site.
- Under certain controlled conditions persons are also allowed to place accumulated grass clippings under shrubs or in gardens as a mulching material provided the depositor has the permission of the owner of property where landscape material are to be placed if other than the depositor's own property. Grass used for mulching purposes shall be placed so as not to accumulate greater than two inches (2") in thickness and shall be maintained so as to avoid perceptible odor during the decomposition process. (Ord. 75-22, 10-13-1975; amd. Ord. 89-04, 2-13-1989; Ord. 89-08, 2-28-1989; Ord. 90-26, 3-26-1990; Ord. 92-15, 3-9-1992; Ord. 92-27, 5-11-1992; Ord. 96-16, 4-22-1996; Ord. 04-07, 2-23-2004) 7-6-10

[sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book\\_id=511](http://sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/index.php?book_id=511)

### ***Mount Prospect***

Chapter 21. A new Section 302.11, Compost Piles, shall be inserted to be and read as follows: 302.11 Compost Piles. Compost Piles shall not exceed a maximum size of four (4) feet tall by four (4) feet wide by four (4) long. Compost piles shall be located behind the principal structure and are not permitted within any required front or side yards. Compost piles must be located a minimum of five (5) feet from a property line. Compost piles shall be regularly tended to ensure the materials are properly decomposing.

[www2.mountprospect.org/WebLink8/DocView.aspx?id=298025&dbid=0](http://www2.mountprospect.org/WebLink8/DocView.aspx?id=298025&dbid=0)

### ***Niles***

Composting and compost piles. Yard waste materials from the premises and adjoining sidewalk and parkway may be placed in a compost pile, provided that such materials are placed in such a way as not to allow them to be blown by winds. The depositing of garbage, animal waste, meat, meat scraps or products, dairy products, or other materials that may attract animals or vermin or which may provide an obnoxious odor shall be prohibited. A compost pile shall not be placed in any required front yard as defined by the village zoning ordinance, and shall be set back a minimum of three feet from the side yard lot line, set back a minimum of five feet from any rear lot line, and shall not be located less than 30 feet from any neighboring residential dwelling structure. In no event shall a compost pile be located in any side or rear yard drainage or utility easement. A compost pile shall be no more than 36 inches in

height, and shall not exceed a maximum ground area of 10 square feet. Section 302.4.1

[library.municode.com/showDocumentFrame.aspx?clientID=11092&docID=0](http://library.municode.com/showDocumentFrame.aspx?clientID=11092&docID=0)

#### ***Palatine***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

#### ***Park Ridge***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

#### ***Prospect Heights***

Properly maintained compost piles may be utilized by single-family units for gardening and landscaping purposes. Such may be located in the side or backyard, the farthest distance possible on site from neighboring residential structures, patios and swimming pools, a minimum of five feet (5') from the property line. Compost piles shall not contain household garbage and must be regularly maintained by turning the composing material to permit aeration and/or by application of chemicals to induce rapid decomposition and prevent offensive odors. (Ord. 0-90-26, 7-2-1990)

[sterlingcodifiers.com/IL/Prospect%20Heights/index.htm](http://sterlingcodifiers.com/IL/Prospect%20Heights/index.htm)

#### ***Rolling Meadows***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

#### ***Skokie***

- Compost piles shall not contain any materials other than landscape waste.
- Compost piles shall only be located in a rear yard, and shall be placed a minimum of 5 feet away from all property lines.
- Compost piles shall be in compliance with all regulations set forth by the Village Manager.

(Code 1979, § 14.13; Ord. No. 06-1-C-3408, § 2, 1-17-2006)

[library.municode.com/showDocumentFrame.aspx?clientID=13375&docID=0](http://library.municode.com/showDocumentFrame.aspx?clientID=13375&docID=0)

#### ***South Barrington***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code. To satisfy the appropriate zoning setback requirements, residents are to follow their zoning codes relative to their home, typically 25-35 feet.

#### ***Wheeling***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code.

#### ***Wilmette***

Compostable materials such as grass trimmings, wood waste, leaves, weeds, and other garden refuse may be placed in a compost pile, provided that it is enclosed in a fence, box or other barrier or container equal in height to the compost pile and in a manner to prevent materials from being wind-blown. Said fence or box shall not exceed 100 square feet in area and shall not exceed five feet in height. The container shall be set back from the lot line equal to the setback for accessory buildings and shall not be located in the front or side yard, or on a drainage or utility easement. The depositing of

garbage, pet waste, meat scraps or other materials that may attract animals or vermin to the compost pile or which may produce an obnoxious odor shall be prohibited.

Any compost pile shall be maintained in accordance with Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources guide entitled, "A Homeowner's Guide to Recycling Yard Wastes," (reference numbers ILENR/RR-89/03 and XO4628-650M-3-90) as hereafter may be amended from time to time, which is incorporated herein by reference. In the event of a conflict between said guide and the provisions of this code, the code shall supersede the guide and shall govern the maintenance of compost piles to the extent of the conflict. Failure to maintain said compost pile as specified under Section 7-7.4, shall constitute a nuisance as specified under Chapter 14 of the Village Code.

[amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Illinois/wilmette\\_il/chapter7refuserecyclingandyardwastedispo?f=templates\\$fn=document-frame.htm\\$g=%5Bbrank%3A%5Bsum%3A%5Bstem%3Acompost%5D%5D%5D\\$x=server\\$3.0#LPHit1](http://amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Illinois/wilmette_il/chapter7refuserecyclingandyardwastedispo?f=templates$fn=document-frame.htm$g=%5Bbrank%3A%5Bsum%3A%5Bstem%3Acompost%5D%5D%5D$x=server$3.0#LPHit1)

#### ***Winnetka***

No specific regulations. Follow International Property Maintenance Code

#### ***Examples of International Property Maintenance Code***

- All accessory structures, including detached garages, fences and walls, shall be maintained structurally sound and in good repair.
- All exterior property and premises shall be maintained in a clean, safe and sanitary condition. The occupant shall keep that part of the exterior property which such occupant occupies or controls in a clean and sanitary condition.
- The exterior of a structure shall be maintained in good repair, structurally sound and sanitary so as not to pose a threat to the public health, safety or welfare.
- All structures and exterior property shall be kept free from rodent harborage and infestation. Where rodents are found, they shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes which will not be injurious to human health. After pest elimination, proper precautions shall be taken to eliminate rodent harborage and prevent reinfestation.
- All structures shall be kept free from insect and rodent infestation. All structures in which insects or rodents are found shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes that will not be injurious to human health. After pest elimination, proper precautions shall be taken to prevent reinfestation.

[publiccodes.citation.com/icod/ipmc/2012/index.htm](http://publiccodes.citation.com/icod/ipmc/2012/index.htm)

# Backyard Composting

## IT'S ONLY NATURAL

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic materials back into the soil in order for the cycle of life to continue. The billions of living organisms in healthy soil transform dead plants into vital nutrients for new plant growth. Since healthy plants come from healthy soil, one of the best ways you can build healthy soil in your garden and lawn is by using compost. You can easily make compost with landscape trimmings and food scraps in your own backyard. With a small investment in time, you can improve the health and appearance of your yard, save money on fertilizers and mulch, all while preserving natural resources and protecting the health of your family and pets.



### What do I need to do to make compost?

**A Bin or Pile?** Some people start with an easy pile, and then move to a bin when they're ready. You can give your pile some structure with chicken wire, snow fencing, or by nailing scrap wood together to make a four-sided box. A pile works great for just leaves and grass clippings, but when you want to incorporate food waste, it's time to use a bin to prevent rodents. Closed-top bins include turning units, stacking bins, and bins with flip tops. Many communities provide their residents free or discounted bins to encourage backyard composting. Bins can also be purchased from retail or mail order businesses. Take the time to consider your options and then select a bin or pile to fit your needs.

**B Space.** Select a dry, shady, or partly shady spot near a water source and preferably out of sight for your compost pile or bin. Ideally, the compost area should be at least three feet wide by three feet deep by three feet tall (one cubic yard). This size provides enough food and insulation to keep the organisms in the compost warm and happy and working hard. However, piles can be larger or smaller and work just fine if managed well.

**C Browns for carbon, greens for nitrogen, air for organisms, and water for moisture.**

Brown material provides carbon and includes:

- ❁ Paper, like shredded pieces of paper, cardboard, and paper rolls,
- ❁ Dry yard waste, like dry leaves, small branches, and twigs, straw, sawdust, and used potting soil.

Green material provides nitrogen and includes:

- ❁ Wet yard waste like fresh grass clippings, green leaves, and soft garden prunings
- ❁ Food scraps like vegetable and fruit peels, coffee grounds, and tea bags.

### Why compost?

- ❁ **It's earth-friendly:** Food scraps and yard waste make up 20-30% of the waste stream. Making compost keeps these materials out of landfills, where they take up precious space and release methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere.
- ❁ **It benefits your yard:** Compost improves soil structure and texture, increases the soil's ability to hold both water and air, improves soil fertility, and stimulates healthy root development in plants.
- ❁ **It's easy:** You can start with just leaves and grass, then work your way towards composting your food scraps.
- ❁ **It saves money:** Adding compost to your garden can reduce or eliminate the need to buy chemical fertilizers or compost. If you pay for the amount of trash hauled, composting can also cut down on your trash costs.



**Vermicomposting** is a method of composting using a special kind of earthworm known as a red wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*), which eats its weight in organic matter each day. Vermicomposting is typically done in a covered container with a bedding of dirt, newspaper, or leaves. Fruit and vegetable scraps can then be added as food for the worms. Over time, the food will be replaced with worm droppings, a rich brown matter that is an excellent natural plant food. Vermicomposting requires less space than normal composting methods, and is therefore ideal for classrooms, apartments, and high-density urban areas.



## How do I make compost?

- 1 Add your brown and green materials (generally three parts browns to one part greens), making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded. The ideal compost pile contains browns and greens (of varying sizes) placed in alternate layers of different-size particles.
- 2 Mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
- 3 As materials breakdown, the pile will get warm and on cold days you may even see some steam.
- 4 Every time you add to the pile, turnover and fluff it with a pitchfork to provide aeration, unless your bin has a turner.
- 5 When material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, with no remnants of your food or yard waste, your compost is ready to use. There may be a few chunks of woody material left; these can be screened out and put back into a new pile. The resulting compost can be applied to lawns and gardens to help condition the soil and replenish nutrients. Compost should not be used as potting soil for houseplants because it may still contain vegetable and grass seeds.



## Troubleshooting Your Pile

Problem:	Cause	Solution:
<b>Rotten egg smell</b>	<i>Insufficient air or too much moisture</i>	Turn pile and incorporate coarse browns (sawdust, leaves)
<b>Ammonia smell</b>	<i>Too much nitrogen</i>	Incorporate coarse browns (sawdust, leaves)
<b>Pile does not heat up or decomposes slowly</b>	<i>Pile too small</i>	Add more organic matter
	<i>Insufficient moisture</i>	Turn pile and add water
	<i>Lack of nitrogen</i>	Incorporate food waste, grass clippings, or manure (chicken, rabbit, cow, horse)
	<i>Not enough air</i>	Turn pile
	<i>Cold weather</i>	Increase pile size or insulate with straw or a tarp

## How do I get started?

### What to add

#### Greens:

- Uncooked or cooked fruits and vegetables
- Bread and grains
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Grass clippings
- Paper tea bags with the staple removed, if there is one.
- Hair and fur
- Chicken, rabbit, cow, horse manure

#### Browns:

- Cotton or wool rags
- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
- Eggshells
- Nut shells
- Fireplace ashes (from wood burning)
- Sawdust
- Hay and straw
- Yard trimmings (e.g., leaves, branches, twigs)
- Houseplants
- Used potting soil
- Wood chips
- Leaves
- Shredded newspaper
- Cardboard rolls
- Clean paper

### What not to add

- Aluminum, tin or other metal
- Glass
- Dairy products (e.g., butter, milk, sour cream, yogurt) & eggs
- Fats, grease, lard, or oils
- Greasy or oily foods
- Meat or seafood scraps
- Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)
- Soiled diapers
- Plastic
- Stickers from fruits or vegetables (to prevent litter)
- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides
- Roots of perennial weeds
- Coal or charcoal ash
- Firestarter logs
- Treated or painted wood

