

## What is Composting?

Composting is a natural process where organic material is broken down by microorganisms and bacteria into simpler nutrients. The result is added to soil to improve it and benefit plants.



## Why do it?

A third of what we throw away is biodegradable. Instead of tipping this organic stuff into landfill sites why not compost it at home and use it on the garden. Making compost is easy and costs very little in time or effort. It will help you reduce pollution, and not fill up the landfills! Works wonders on all types of soils, your plants will grow and look healthier, save you money on fertilisers, mulches and soil improvers. Digging into planting areas improves the soil structure.



## How to Compost

Get the ingredients right, use a mixture of green and brown ingredients and you will not fail.

## The recipe!

**Greens:** break down quickly, keep the compost moist and have a high nutrient value. Greens work as



'*activators*' or '*hotter rotters*', they get the composting started. Greens include: Vegetable and Fruit scraps, crushed Egg Shells, Grass cuttings and Young Weeds, Comfrey leaves, Tea Bags, Coffee Grounds, Flowers, Soft Garden clippings, Bedding Plants.



**Browns:** usually tougher plant material, slower to rot but give the compost its fibre and structure, create air pockets which are needed for air circulation. Browns include: Straw, Hay, Wood Chippings, Sawdust, Wood Ash, Hamster and Rabbit Bedding, Shredded Paper and Cardboard, Paper towels & Bags, Egg Boxes, Shredded or Chopped Wood Prunings, Leaves (small amounts).

If it can rot it will compost, but some items are best avoided.

## Don't put in

**X** Meat, Fish, Cooked Food including Cooked Vegetables, Bread and Bones, Coal or Coke Ash, Cat and Dog Litter, Disposable Nappies, Glossy Magazines and Newspaper, Plastic, Glass or Metal, Diseased Plant Material, Large unchopped woody branches.



## A balanced diet

The right balance is something you learn by experience. But layering the greens and browns and regularly turning (at least once a month) the stuff helps things break down faster. Try to prevent layering in thick layers. Moisture helps the pile decompose, if its too dry add enough water so that its moist and not soggy.

After 6 to 12 months the bottom of the pile should be ready to use.

## Tips

1. Too much greens it will decay to a soggy, smelly heap, add more browns.
2. Woody items decay very slowly; they are best chopped or shredded first.
3. The more you put in, the hotter the weather, the quicker it composts.
4. Place the compost bin directly onto the ground, not onto concrete or patio slabs.
5. Turn the pile so that oxygen builds up and the material decomposes quicker.
6. Add some soil to get it started.

## Useful web sites:

- [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com)

