

## BACKYARD COMPOSTING TIPS

### TO BEGIN:

1. **LOCATION:** Select a level area for your bin with good water drainage. A partially shaded spot is best. Keep you bin 8” to 12” away from walls, fences, bushes, plants and openings to you home.
2. Before you place your bin on the ground, loosen the soil so it is sitting in dirt.
3. Once your bin is in place, put a 4”to 6” layer of dead plants, twigs or small branches on the bottom.
4. Follow the 3-steps to Composting.

### 3-STEPS TO COMPOSTING

1. **ORGANIC STUFF:** Always feed your bin equal amounts of GREENS (materials high in nitrogen) and BROWNS ( materials high in carbon). See the YES and NO chart below for a complete list. When adding new materials to your bin, start with a layer of BROWNS first, then add a layer of GREENS. Top GREENS with a one-inch layer of soil or finished compost. Always bury your food scraps in the center of the pile, under the layer of soil.
2. **MOISTURE:** Keep your pile as damp as a well-wrung sponge. Be sure to check moisture on hot summer or windy days. Sprinkle with water when dry.
3. **AIR:** Add air to your pile every 2 to 3 weeks. Poke holes through the pile with a broom handle and loosen with a garden fork.



TEND TO YOUR COMPOST!

## **MATERIAL LIST**

<b>YES GREENS</b>	<b>YES BROWNS</b>	<b>NO</b>
Bread (no butter)	Dryer lint	Barbecue charcoal
Coffee grounds & filters	Grass clippings (dried)	Fish
Egg shells (crushed)	Leaves (dry)	Coal ash
Feathers	Woodchips (small amounts)	Meats
Flowers	Hardwood ash (thin layers)	Dairy products
Fruit scraps	Sawdust (thin layers)	Bones
House plants	Straw	Oils
Vegetable scraps		Peanut butter
Leaves		Fats
Green plant trimmings		Diseased or insect-infested plants
Tea leaves and tea bags		Feces (animal or human)
Hair (animal and human)		Weeds with mature seeds
Grass (small amounts)		Wood ash or dust that is treated
		Weeds that damage (i.e. crab grass, wild morning glory)

## **TROUBLE SHOOTING GUIDE**

<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>PROBABLE CAUSES</b>	<b>SOLUTION</b>
Bad odour	Too many greens	Add browns and mix. Turn pile and top with soil
Smells like rotten eggs	Not enough air	Turn pile for several days until odor is gone. Top with soil
Pile is not composting	Too dry	Moisten with water until damp
Flies around pile	Exposed food	Bury food or cover with a layer of soil
Unwelcome animal visitors (raccoons, dogs, rodents, etc.)	Exposed food or wrong items added	Remove any meat, fats, or dairy products. Bury food scraps and cover with soil

MONITOR THE TEMPERATURE OF YOUR COMPOST !



## IS IT DONE YET?

If you properly follow the 3-Steps to Composting, you should have finished compost in 2 to 3 months. To speed up the composting process, add new materials in tiny pieces, add air to your pile more often or add a layer of garden soil or manure. Your pile is ready when it no longer has traces of GREENS and BROWNS and is dark brown with an earthy smell. You may find that only the bottom of your pile is ready to use while the top is still decomposing.

Before you use your compost, you may wish to screen it through wire mesh and return any non-composted items to your bin.

### HOW TO USE YOUR COMPOST

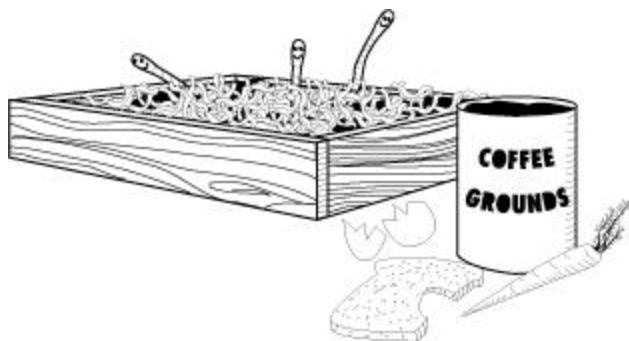
1. Dig some compost into the soil before you plant.
2. Sprinkle some screened compost on your lawn and on the soil of houseplants.
3. Use some compost as a mulch around trees and plants to retain moisture.
4. Mix compost with other potting materials to start seedlings or to re-pot house plants.
5. Give some to a friend.

### WINTER COMPOSTING

A little snow and sub-zero temperatures do not mean an end to composting. Continue to compost as normal but save some fall leaves or dry grass clippings to use throughout the winter.

### VERMICOMPOSTING

Vermicomposting is an easy method of composting indoors. Follow the same steps and do's and don'ts of backyard composting except add worms to your bin. Approximately a half-pound of "Red Wigglers" is enough for your average apartment size compost bin.



GIVE US A TRY! WE CAN HELP!