

A person wearing a grey shirt, khaki shorts, and black sandals is raking a pile of autumn leaves on a green lawn. The leaves are in various shades of orange, red, and yellow. The person is holding a black rake and is in the process of gathering the leaves into a pile.

Household Composting Guide



What is Compost ? Nature's Recycling System

Compost is a natural fertiliser and soil conditioner that can be made at home from organic wastes. In a compost heap, these wastes are converted into a rich humus by soil micro organisms, insects and worms.

Home Composting Has Many Benefits:

- It improves the soil by returning nutrients and adding texture.
- It is low cost and easy to make.
- It reduces the amount of rubbish sent to landfills.



HOW TO MAKE COMPOST

Compost heaps should be about 1m square and up to 1m high. Manufactured compost bins are neat, efficient, covered containers that fit into a small space, or you can build compost bins from available materials. Compost bins should be bottomless and placed on the bare ground. The process works best in warm, moist locations.

What to Put into Compost - Save and use:

“Greens” – nitrogen rich wastes:

Kitchen food scraps, fruit peels, coffee grounds, tea bags, grass and plant clippings, hair, fur, animal manure, blood and bone, seaweed, fish bones, chopped weeds (less noxious varieties).

“Browns” – high in carbon and other elements:

Dried leaves, untreated sawdust or wood shavings, hay, peat, vacuum cleaner dust, shredded paper and newspaper, egg shells and crushed sea shells, wood ash.

What to Keep Out of Compost: Meat, grease, fat, dairy products and large bones.

THE BASIC LAYERING

Begin with a bottom layer of coarse, twiggly plant material, followed by alternative layers of “green” and “brown” wastes, and a layer of soil.

CARE FOR YOUR COMPOST

- Turn your heap after it heats up (this destroys weeds and seeds).
- When it cools down turn it into another unlayered heap or bin.
- If it becomes too wet, turn and add “brown material”.
- Turn your heap if it develops a bad odour.



TO SPEED COMPOSTING:

- Chop or shred components well and turn frequently.
- Cover the heap in heavy rain.
- Keep moist - don't let it dry out.
- If at first it doesn't heat up, add more “green” material, such as manure or blood and bone.

WHEN IS COMPOST READY TO USE?

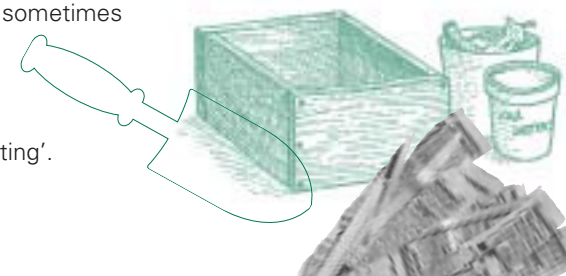
Compost is ready to use after two or three turnings, when it looks like potting mix. Use it wherever good organic fertiliser is needed.

Home Composting and Your Environment - How the Environment Benefits

- Composting creates more fertile, useable soil.
- The amount of water pollution, gas release and odour from landfills is decreased.
- Fewer garden chemicals are required, because compost rich soil grows healthier, more productive plants.

Vermi (Worm) Composting - What is it?

Vermicomposting is composting using worms to eat your fruit and vegetable scraps. The worms are exactly the same worms as those in your compost heap or bin outside but are contained in a smaller, transportable bin that can be indoors, outdoors or on a veranda or porch. The worm bins are sometimes called worm farms or worm factories - for more information see the Auckland Regional Council's Worm Composting brochure 'Worm Composting'.





Whakatepea te kō, kia kotahi We're in it together 09 366 2000 www.arc.govt.nz

For further information:

Auckland Regional Council
Private Bag 92012
Auckland

Phone 366 2000, (outside of toll free area
on 0800 80 60 40) for further information.