Let Nature Work for You!

What is Compost and Why do it?

Compost is created through a natural biological process called decomposition, in more or less controlled circumstances.

The natural process of decay will change organic wastes into a valuable humus-like material called compost.

There are many benefits to composting. It is a simple and inexpensive way to dispose of and recycle food scraps and yard waste that would otherwise enter the waste stream.

Compost also helps improve the health and quality of the soil when added.

Compost is ready when it looks dark and crumbly and none of the starting ingredients are visible.

For more information contact
Master Gardeners of Carroll County
or County Extension Office
700 Agricultural Drive. Westminster, MD 21157
410-386-2760

Do Compost	Don't Compost
Grass Clippings	Meat
Leaves	Fish, poultry
Dead Plants	Dairy products
Fruit wastes	Grease
Coffee grounds	Bones
Straw/Hay	Treated wood
Vegetable scraps	plastic/glass/metal
Hair/lint	Cat or Dog waste

Troubleshooting Your Pile	
Problem:	Cause:
Compost Smells	Turn the pile and add browns
Too wet	Turn the pile and add dry material
Too dry	Turn the pile and add water
Cool to the touch	Add more greens and turn the pile

Carroll County, Maryland Recycling

Carroll County Department of Public Works

225 N. Center Street
Westminster, MD. 21157-5194
Phone:410-386-2035
Fax:410-840-8279
E-mail: SolidWasteRecycling@ccg.carr.org

Carroll County Department of Public Works

Bureau of Solid Waste

Composting

Nature's Way To Recycle

Recycling Operations
www.recyclecarroll.org

Composting Made Easy

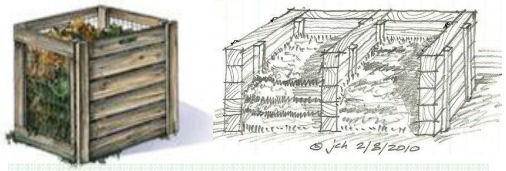
You can compost in a variety of ways. Just make sure you select a convenient and well-drained location to compost

Choose a System

Manufactured bin

Holding Bins or Piles: A holding unit only requires placing wastes into a pile or bin as they are generated. You can give your pile some structure with chicken wire, snow fencing, or by nailing scrap wood together to make a four-sided box. Non-woody materials such as grass clippings, crop wastes, garden weeds, and leaves work best in these systems. Openings in the sides need to be large enough to permit air, but small enough to contain the materials that are composting. Several holding bins linked together can be used for building and turning active compost piles.

Wire mesh bin



Single Chamber and Multi Chambered Bins

Building the Pile

The Recipe: Browns for carbon, greens for nitrogen, air for organisms, water for moisture and the heat created through natural decomposition helps the microorganisms as well as the chemical reactions that transform your waste.

Browns are dry materials such as wood chips, small branches, twigs, shredded paper, dried leaves, plants, and straw. Brown materials reduce unpleasant orders.

Greens are wet materials such as fresh grass clippings, fruit and vegetable remains (ex. fruit peels, coffee grounds, and tea bags), green leaves and soft garden prunings. Green materials supply the compost nitrogen.

Air is essential for the survival of aerobic organisms.

Water keeps the organisms alive and dissolves the materials.

Geo-bin lightweight black

Heat is created as the microbes work. Their activity causes temperatures within the pile to rise to as much as 160 degrees F., which speeds the process and kills many diseases, organisms and weed seeds.

Slow /Fast Compost

Slow or Cold: There is no maintenance to this form of composting, but keep in mind that the process is slow and will take a year or longer for the material to break down into compost material. **Fast:** Hot composting happens when you follow the basics carefully and the pile is about a cubic yard (3'x3'x3'). Turn your pile about once a week and you can have compost in a few months.

Compost Layering

Loosen soil under the area where the bin or pile will be placed.

Add your brown materials making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded. (2-8 inches).

Mix grass clippings and green waste and layer onto the pile burying fruit and vegetable waste.

Water as needed to make "sponge" moist.

Repeat layers watering as needed.

The ideal compost pile contains browns and greens placed in alternate layers of different sized particles. Generally three part browns to one part greens.