
How to start your backyard compost



Step 1: Choose your composter of choice

I recommend: [Amazon's IM4000 Dual Chamber Tumbling Composter](#). It is easy to build, use, keeps pests out, and doesn't blow over.

Step 2: Start collecting your foodscraps

You can keep a small composting receptacle in your kitchen, or if you have space in your freezer, keep food scraps frozen until you are ready to deposit them in your garden.

What can go in:

Apple cores, banana and orange peels, coffee grinds, eggshells, melon rinds, yard waste like leaves and grass.

What can't go in:

Meat, dairy, bones, grease, whole eggs, cheese, sauces, fat, or pet feces, diseased plants

Collection Tips :

Try and remove produce stickers from peels at this stage. They can be taken off later, but now is easiest.

Small pieces decompose faster so slice up scraps now for faster decomposition. Placing your tumbler in a sunny spot will also speed up the decomposition process.

Your Compost Recipe



Once you've placed your tumbler in your yard, you need 4 things for a successful compost

1. **Brown material** – leaves, sawdust, and twigs

2. **Green material** – food scraps, flowers, and grass clippings

3. **Water** – if the bin is not in a place where it could get rained on, be sure to regularly add water to your mix. The pile should be kept moist, but not soggy.

4. **Oxygen** – your compost setup needs to have ventilation flaps. Regularly turn your compost. In the composter I recommend, you can easily turn it because of its tumbler design.

And mix! Now, in a matter of weeks to months, with regular water and turning, you will have compost! Any non-decomposed material can be used for your next batch. It is as easy as that! Your compost is rich in nutrients and biodiversity – perfect for your garden.

Trouble-shooting



In case your compost needs some TLC

Symptom	Problem	Solution
Rotten odor	Excess moisture material tightly pack	Turn pile, or add dry, porous material; turn pile, or make pile small
Ammonia odor	Too much nitrogen	Add high carbon material, such as sawdust, wood chips, or straw
Pile is dry	Not enough water; too much woody material	Turn and moisten; add fresh green waste
Pile is wet but not composting	Lack of nitrogen	Add fresh green waste

**These tips have been sourced from the Bergen
County Utilities Authority**

**You can find any trouble-shooting information you
need online or also through their hotline at
1-201-807-5825**

Why Compost?



Reason 1: One big science experiment

Composting can be an activity for your whole family to learn about the science behind a fundamental natural process.

Reason 2: Fight Climate Change

In landfills, organic matter decomposes without access to oxygen, causing it to produce the greenhouse gas methane. Methane has a global warming potential that is 21 times more potent than CO₂. Almost 30% of household waste is food waste and garden waste. Developing more sustainable habits for handling food waste is critical for fighting climate change.

Reason 3: For your garden

In addition to fighting climate change, compost strengthens soil and promotes healthy plant growth. Not only is compost great for your garden, but also, by adding organic material to your soil through composting, the soil's water retention is improved. This can help with yard flooding.

What if I don't have a yard?



Consider a compost subscription service

A local option we have in Bergen County is **Neighborhood Compost**. For a price, they will pick up your food scraps and sustainably dispose of them.

Learn more at

<https://www.neighborhoodcompost.com/>

Pool together with a friend or neighbor

Everyone stands to benefit from less food waste and more healthy soil and plants. Use the compost conversation to foster community