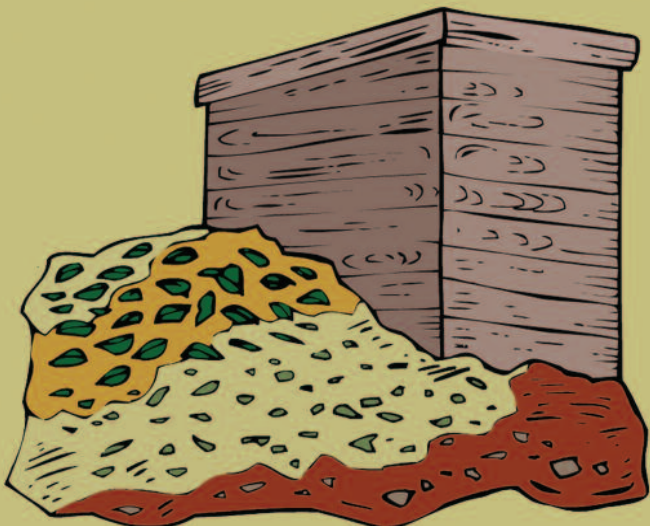




Composting...

Nature's Way of Recycling



Avoid problems, pests, weeds and diseases:

Keep these out of your compost pile!

- NO** meat, fish, bones, dairy or oily foods
- NO** dog or cat feces
- NO** grass clippings treated with herbicides
- NO** diseased plants or weed seeds
- NO** invasive or noxious weeds

troubleshooting

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Smells like rotten eggs (like sulfur) or sour (like ammonia)	Aerate pile, add more air by turning it, add more carbon (leaves or sawdust)
Too dry	Add water and turn
Too wet	Aerate pile daily until returns to proper moisture level, add dry leaves or sawdust
Not decomposing or "working"	Add water, add more nitrogen sources, turn the pile, increase size of pile
Attracts animals	Enclose the compost, install ¼ inch hardware cloth underneath
Attracts flies	Keep compost covered or top with leaves or sawdust

Compost demonstration centers... learn more and see the results!

Hood River County OSU Extension Office
2990 Experiment Station Drive, Hood River

The Dalles Imagination Garden
Klindt Drive in the port area, The Dalles



Learn more on-line about composting and where to buy compost bins locally at www.tricountyrecycle.com click "Recycle" then "Compost"

Compost happens naturally over time.
It's up to you how to manage the process.



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Composting...

Nature's Way of Recycling

Composting—the “process”

breaking down organic material such as leaves, twigs, grass clippings and vegetative food waste through decomposition by microorganisms

Compost—the “product”

the dark brown, crumbly soil amendment material that results from effective composting. It contains nutrients, holds water, and creates good plant growing conditions

Why make compost in your backyard?

Reduce waste & save money

Lower your garbage bill by not putting organic material in your trash can.

Protect the environment

Keep organic material out of the landfill, save landfill space for the future PLUS reduce methane gas production (which contributes to greenhouse gas problems).

Reuse & recycle

Find a good use for organic material by making your own free, nutrient-rich soil amendment.

Show off your green thumb!

Use compost to improve your yard and garden. As a soil conditioner or mulch, it can reduce the amount of water and fertilizer you need, as well as help you grow healthier and more productive plants.

What do you need for composting?

Carbon-rich materials

The “energy food” for microorganisms

- Plant materials that are dry, tough, fibrous, or tan/brown in color—“browns”

Examples: dry leaves, twigs, pine needles, wood chips, cornstalks, straw, rotted hay, sawdust, shredded paper, paper towels/ napkins/plates, coffee filters, dryer lint, floor sweepings

Nitrogen-rich materials

The “protein source” for microorganisms to grow and multiply

- Plant materials that are moist and/or green—“greens”
- Examples: freshly pulled weeds, fresh grass clippings, over-ripe fruits and vegetables, kitchen scraps such as peels, coffee grounds and tea bags, egg shells
- Also includes high-protein organic matter such as livestock manures, feathers, pet & human hair

Water

Acts like “gasoline” or fuel to get your pile working

- Keep your pile as damp as a wrung-out sponge
- Too much moisture drowns microorganisms but too little will dehydrate them

Oxygen

The “air flow” in your pile

- To do their work efficiently, microorganisms require a lot of oxygen
- You can aerate your pile by turning or stirring it occasionally

Easy-does-it SLOW Composting

“Make a pile and leave it”

- Just create a pile with a mixture of green and brown materials and keep adding to it
- In 1 or 2 years, the materials at the bottom will be compost

“Dig a trench and bury it”

Food scraps (no meat, dairy or oil) are buried in the soil at least 1 foot deep in your flower bed or garden spot

“Sheet composting”

Lightly scattering leaves, vegetable scraps and grass your garden spot

Fast or HOT Composting

- Managing the mix of materials, water and oxygen to speed up the process, usually done with a covered pile or some type of enclosed compost bin
- Will produce compost in about 2-3 months

Hot Composting Tips:

Volume - a pile should be at least 1 cubic yard (3'x3'x3') to generate enough heat to speed up decomposition. Most ready-to-use bins are about this size.

Recipe - generally speaking, mix 1 to 2 parts “brown” material (dry, coarse and carbon rich) with 1 part “green” material (moist, dense and nitrogen rich).

Surface area - small particles will break down faster than larger ones, so to speed up the composting process, chop, shred or chip large pieces

Moisture - Cover the pile with a lid, tarp or plastic sheet to maintain moisture levels at about the consistency of a damp sponge. Too wet? Add more dry materials. Too dry? Sprinkle with water or stick a water hose into several spots in the pile

Temperature - the microorganisms will give off heat as they break down the organic materials. The ideal temperature for the center of the pile is 130-140 F. You can check the heat using a compost thermometer

Aerate the pile - turn or mix the pile once a week or more to continually provide oxygen for the microorganisms. You can also increase air flow by building your pile on a raised wood platform or on a pile of branches; make sure there are air vents in your compost bin; or put 1-2 perforated 4-inch plastic pipes down through the center of your pile.

WORM Composting

• Let worms do the work of composting your kitchen scraps...and use worm castings for soil amendment

- You can buy or build a wood or plastic worm compost bin
- Stock it with “red wiggler” worms (manure worms), shredded paper or leaves, some moisture, and food scraps
- After several months, you can harvest some dark crumbly compost (worm castings) from the bottom of the bin

