Backyard Composting How-To

Why you should compost

- Compost reduces amount of waste in the landfill.
- Compost reduces the amount of methane (a greenhouse gas) that is released into the air.
- Finished compost can be used in your garden, as potting soil, as fertilizer for your lawn and even for your house plants.

Clarifications

- Compost will not attract rats or other pests.
- Compost will not smell if maintained correctly.

What is composting?

- Breaking down food and yard waste and turning it into fertile soil.

What to compost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greens (nitrogen)</th>
<th>Browns (carbon)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and veggie scraps</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breads and grains</td>
<td>Straw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackers and starches</td>
<td>Pine needles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crushed eggshells</td>
<td>Shredded paper or newspaper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee grounds and filters</td>
<td>Chopped corn cobs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea leaves and tea bags</td>
<td>Nut shells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass clippings and garden weeds</td>
<td>Toilet paper/paper towel rolls</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Old matches</td>
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The composting process

1. Start by designating an area of your yard.
2. Try to keep a ratio of two parts brown to one part green.
3. Use a shovel to turn your pile once a week in the summer and once every 3 weeks in the winter.
4. Your compost is complete when it looks like dark, rich soil and none of the original scraps are present (takes about 8 months).

Tips:

- If you collect food waste faster than the compost is being produced, start a new pile so it will decompose faster.
- If your pile starts to smell add some brown and turn/mix it.
- Cover your compost pile with a tarp in the winter to lock in heat and moisture so it will decompose faster.
- To avoid pests:
  - Do not add meat, bones, dairy or oils.
  - Keep a layer of dry/brown material on bottom and on top.
  - Keep in partial sunshine.
  - For more tips visit http://eartheasy.com/grow_compost.html or eco-d.org with any questions or concerns.

Too much finished compost to use yourself? Share it with your neighbors, coworkers, family and friends!