

COMPOSTING



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DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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According to recent USEPA national statistics:

Yard Waste & Food = 25% of the common types of waste we throw away

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting: controlled decomposition of organic materials using aerobic bacteria. Composting is an environmentally sound method of waste reduction and recycling. These organics can be easily diverted from landfill disposal and instead composted into a valuable recyclable material for beneficial use!

BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING

Composting can help reduce volume by as much as 80%.
Composting can preserve landfill space; organics are diverted from landfill disposal.
Finished compost in the soil improves plant growth by:
Enhancing soil texture
Adding nutrients back into the soil
Increasing the soil's ability to retain water & nutrients
Improving soil structure by the addition of organic matter
Loosening heavy soils, allowing better root penetration
Reducing the need for fertilizers, water, fertilizers and pesticides
Used finished compost on your gardens & landscapes



A compost pile started in late spring can be ready for use in the fall. Start another pile in autumn for use in the spring.



Permitted Composting Facilities

Illinois EPA permitted composting facilities that offer residential drop-off for landscape waste:
Thelen Sand & Gravel Compost Facility (Route 173 & Wilmot Rd. – Fox Lake) 847-395-3313
Midwest Organics (29353 Darrel Rd. – McHenry) 847-493-9116

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HOW DO I START COMPOSTING?

Composting does not mean slow rotting!

PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH Composting must not create leachate, prejudicial odors or other nuisance conditions (i.e. rodent, insect or other vermin harborage). Strict oversight and proper composting temperature contribute to pathogen reduction and inactivate weed seeds. **Responsible composting = no objectionable odor, no adverse impact on surface water or drinking water or nuisance animals/insects!**

BASIC COMPOSTING RECIPE:

green materials & brown materials + moisture + temperature + oxygen

Keys to ideal composting recipe

Carbon : Nitrogen ratio = 25 - 30:1

Moisture content = 40- 50%

Temperature = 150 degrees (peak)

O₂ = 20%

COMMON BACKYARD COMPOSTING METHODS

In-vessel Composter or Rotating Bins



Build your own compost bin



Open static pile or windrow (3 ft. x 3 ft. x 3 ft. ideal size)



COMMON COMPOSTABLE MATERIALS

GREEN MATERIAL

(Nitrogen source)

BROWN MATERIAL

(Carbon source)

Grass clippings	Leaves
Weeds	Garden residue (dry)
Coffee grounds & tea leaves	Twigs & wood chips
Fruit & vegetable scraps (fresh)	Shredded newspaper
Garden residue (fresh)	Hay or straw
Pet and human hair	

Do Not compost fats, oils, greases, meat, fish, dairy or pet waste