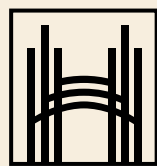


Backyard Composting in Hamilton



*Toss it. Turn it.
Spread it.*

User's guide to
backyard composting



Hamilton

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

What is composting?

Composting is the process by which kitchen and yard waste is turned into a dark nutrient-rich soil conditioner. By returning nutrients back to the soil, compost reduces the need for expensive chemical fertilizers. Organic waste can constitute up to 40% of household waste, so diverting it from our landfill has the potential to save an enormous amount of valuable land.

Getting Started

- Alternate wet (kitchen scraps) and dry (yard material) waste: **Green** and **Brown**
- Chop or shred materials up before you put them into the composter
- Composter contents should be moist like a damp sponge
- Composting can continue through the winter. The breakdown process will slow down and eventually stop once the pile freezes; however, will resume in the spring
- The smaller the material is, the more surface area is exposed, and the faster it will decompose
- Get a small container for your kitchen to hold scraps

Acceptable

Greens – nitrogen-rich:

- Bread (no butter, oil)
- Coffee grounds, filters
- Egg shells
- Evergreen needles
- Flowers
- Fruit, vegetable peels/scrap
- Grass
- House plants
- Leaves
- Nut shells (except walnuts)
- Tea bags, leaves
- Weeds (before they go to seed)

Browns – carbon-rich:

- Hair
- Lint – dryer, vacuum
- Manure
- Mulched leaves
- Pasta
- Rice

- Sawdust (non-treated wood)
- Shredded paper – newspaper, cereal boxes, paper packaging
- Straw, hay
- Wood chips

NOT Acceptable

- Bones
- Charcoal
- Chemically-treated grass clippings
- Coal ashes
- Contaminated matter
- Cooking oils
- Crabgrass
- Dairy products
- Diapers
- Diseased or insect-infected plants
- Fats
- Fatty/oily foods (cheese, butter)
- Fish scraps
- Glass
- Grease
- Lime
- Meats
- Metal
- Pet wastes
- Plastic
- Rhubarb leaves
- Sanitary products
- Walnut shells, leaves
- Weeds with mature seeds
- Wood ashes
- Woody yard waste

Where to get a composter?

- Buy one at a retail store or a Municipal Service Centre
- Make one

Waste Reduction FAQs

1 Do I have to add starter?

No. There are starter products on the market but composting will occur if you follow the practices of turning the compost, adding small amounts of compostable material, layering browns and greens, and adding moisture.

2 Can I throw the garden weeds in?

Maybe! Crabgrass is NOT allowed, because it will continue to grow. Most weeds that are not in the seed bearing stage are okay. We don't want to be planting weed seeds in our garden, and that is where the compost will end up as a finished product.

3 How about hedge clippings?

Some – anything that is really woody takes a long time to decompose, so you can chop it up or shred it up and add to compost in small quantities. New growth hedge clippings that haven't attained the "woody" quality yet can be added in layers.

4 Can I compost in the winter?

Yes. Even though the process slows down and usually stops during cold weather, the freeze/thaw cycle helps organic material to break down faster once temperatures rise. In the spring, organic waste will decompose rapidly. You can speed up the composting process by insulating the bin with a thick, dark plastic sheet, old carpeting, or thick layers of leaves, hay or straw. If properly insulated, the pile will not freeze and should be turned often.



Common Problems

- **Bad Odour:** turn to aerate; add dry materials to the pile if it is too wet
- **Center of pile is dry:** moisten and turn pile
- **Compost is damp & warm only in the middle:** add more materials & mix all ingredients together
- **Compost is damp & sweet smelling; not heating up:** add grass clippings or manure
- **Compost is frozen:** decomposition will begin again in the spring
- **Compost in not good quality:** add equal portions of green and brown materials to compost
- **Insects or rodents:** do not add meat, fish, or fatty foods to composter; cover with new soil
- **Compost is too wet:** move to location with proper drainage; add dry leaves; aerate

For more information on
Waste Diversion Programs, please call:
905-546-CITY (2489)
In the 519 area: 519-647-2577
In the Campbellville area call: 905-634-2971
Visit our website at:
www.hamilton.ca/waste
wastemanagement@hamilton.ca

需要中文咨询, 请打如下电话

Pour des informations en français, s'il vous plaît composez le 905.546.2489 • Per informazioni in Italiano per favore chiama 905.546.2489 • Para Informações em português, por favor ligue 905.546.2489 • Po Informacje z języku polskim, proszę dzwonic 905.546.2489



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