

Composting: What is It and Should I do It?

How bizarre it is that we put our food scraps in plastic bags and send them to landfills where they likely won't break down at a normal rate? All of the leftover nutrients in our food scraps rarely back it back into usable soil, and that's a real shame.

Composting is the natural decomposition of organic materials into a dark, nutrient-rich soil component called humus. Composting requires three ingredients: browns, greens, and water. Browns (carbon-rich) are materials such as dry leaves, wood chips, bark, and sawdust. Greens (nutrient-rich) are materials such as grass clippings, green leaves, garden debris, fruit and vegetable peels, and other kitchen wastes. Water helps the compost break down into organic material.

To Compost

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Eggshells
- Coffee grounds & filters
- Tea bags
- Nutshells
- Shredded newspaper
- Cardboard

- Paper
- Yard trimmings
- Grass clippings
- Houseplants
- Hay and straw
- Leaves
- Sawdust
- Wood chips
- Cotton and wool rags
- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
- Hair and fur
- Fireplace ashes

Not to Compost

- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs (harmful to plants)
- Coal or charcoal ash (harmful to plants)
- Dairy products (creates odor and attracts rodents)
- Disease or insect-ridden plants (harmful to plants)
- Fats, grease, lard, and oils (creates odor & attracts rodents)
- Meat/fish bones & scraps (creates odor & attracts rodents)
- Pet wastes (harmful to humans)
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides (might kill beneficial composting organisms)

As you can see, you can compost a lot of materials! Imagine how much less you'd be sending to the landfill if you were composting. Additionally, the soil component that composting creates, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers (saving you money, time, and plastic!), helps retain soil moisture, and suppresses plant diseases. Composting does require a little work and may not be feasible for everyone but check out the next blog on composting to see if it is something you can incorporate into your life!