



Composting in your Backyard

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Why is this project necessary?	<p>Composting is one of the most powerful actions that one can take to reduce trash, address climate change, and provide fertile soil on a budget. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, “28% of materials that go into landfills can AND should be composted.” Unfortunately, when these waste products go to landfills, they don’t get the oxygen needed to decompose aerobically and instead decompose with an anabolic process which releases a greenhouse gas – methane. However, composting allows you to turn these scraps and waste into a beneficial soil amendment! For example, compost generated from the pile could be used directly in a flower/vegetable bed to help increase moisture retention, maintain consistent soil temperature, and fortify the soil with essential nutrients.</p>
How to start a composting pile?	<p>A major component of composting is ensuring that you have a proper balance of the following materials: carbon-rich (“brown”) materials, nitrogen-rich (“green”) materials, water, and oxygen. A list of nitrogen and carbon materials that can be composted and what materials to avoid placing in your pile can be found here.</p> <p>First, start your pile with a four- to six-inch layer of bulky browns such as twigs or wood chips. This layer will absorb extra liquid, elevate the pile, and allow air to circulate at the base. Then whenever adding additional materials to the pile, it is important to alternate between brown and green materials in a 3:1 ratio of browns to greens. Some gardeners will incorporate a nitrogen source when first beginning the pile, such as a nitrogen fertilizer, to jumpstart the decomposition process.</p> <p>Once you have begun your pile, it is pretty simple and straightforward to maintain! You must turn your pile once every two weeks to aerate the pile and ensure that the bacteria and other microorganisms receive plenty of oxygen. The pile should also be kept moist, like a squeezed-out sponge. During average rainfall, the pile should remain damp enough and not need any extra water. However, the pile might need to be watered occasionally during dry spells.</p>
When should you start a composting pile?	<p>You can begin a composting pile at any time of the year without any drawbacks. However, many prefer to start in the fall, so the compost will be ready to use in the garden by the following spring. In addition, fall leaves make an excellent composting material to help you kick off your compost pile.</p>
Where should you place the composting pile?	<p>For convenience, most tend to place their composting bin within easy reach of the office and garden. Aesthetically, some choose to set their bin in a location where it will not be too visible from the street or other areas where people might congregate. One excellent option is to place your compost bin in a partially shaded spot. Shade from the office, outbuilding or anything else can work. This keeps the bin from getting too hot in direct sunlight but still allows it to get plenty of warmth and some sunlight periodically. A compost pile is all about balance!</p>

Possible Composting Bins, Prices, and Pros/Cons



[VIVOSUN 80 Gallon Compost Bin](#)

Price: \$99.95

Pros: Top cover (can easily dump into bin), bottom cover (removing compost), built in circulation system

Cons: Pricey option, have to aerate by hand



[Miracle-Gro 27.7 Gallon Tumbling Composter](#)

Price: \$80.00

Pros: Easily contained (pest proof), easily aerated, made from recycled plastics

Cons: Only one door compartment (difficult to remove the compost)



Handmade Composting Bin

Cost: Price of materials

Pros: Can customize based on personal preferences, aesthetically pleasing

Cons: Will take more time to build



[Cedar Stationary Composter](#)

Cost: \$82.00

Pros: Aesthetically pleasing, open top (easy to use)

Cons: Have to aerate by hand

Want to know more?

For more information on how to get started on composting, you can call some of the agencies within our watershed below:

The Civic Garden Center's Horticulture hotline at **(513) 221-8733**

Or

Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services' Yard waste Recycling hotline at **(513) 946-7755**.

Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District:

<https://www.butlerswcd.org/compost>

Hamilton County Resource

<https://www.hcdoes.org/246/Composting>

Great Parks of Hamilton County

<https://www.greatparks.org/discovery/compost>

Ohio EPA

<https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/materials-and-waste-management/guides-and-manuals/composting-resources-and-guidance>

Use this quick reference guide to get started and happy composting!

Backyard Composting

1



Select a dry, shady spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.

2



Add brown and green materials as you collect them, making sure to chop or shred larger pieces.

Add water as needed.



3



When the material at the bottom is a dark, rich color, your compost is ready to use.

4



Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings, fruit and vegetable waste, and green waste into the pile.

