



# Backyard Composting

## Nature's way of recycling

Composting is a natural process of decomposition of organic materials into a rich soil that you can use for your own gardens! This is a sustainable practice and saves you money!

Composting keeps heavy food waste out of our trash bins and landfills where it can breakdown anaerobically and lead to production of **greenhouse gasses**.

### How does it work?

There are many important characteristics of a good compost pile that allow for optimal biodegradation. The most important include:

- **Critters** - bacteria, fungi, molds, earth-worms, insects and other soil organisms. These critters eat all organic material and convert nutrients to a form plants can use.
- **Moisture** - the pile should remain damp but not dripping wet. A cover helps to hold in moisture and you can add water during dry spells.
- **Air** - the compost critters need oxygen to thrive. Remember to make air passages and "fluff" your pile.
- **Organic material** - containing varying amounts of carbon and nitrogen which feed the compost organisms. Use about 3 parts "brown" to one part "green".

## How to make a compost pile:

### 1. Build or purchase a compost bin

You can create a bin simply made from wire, wood, concrete blocks or a barrel with sufficient drainage holes. The new age composter is an enclosed bin provided by the DEP. These are available for purchase for **\$55** each through the **Board of Health at Auburn Town Hall, 104 Central Street**. Enclosed compost piles keep out pests, hold heat & moisture in, and have a neat appearance. Be sure to set up the bin in a shady area with good drainage.

### 2. Build your pile

Begin with a layer of coarse material such as corn stalks to allow for air passages. Add alternating layers of "green" and "brown" materials and mix. You want to sprinkle with soil every 12 inches.

### 3. Add water

Keep the compost pile *damp* or it will not decompose

### 4. Keep oxygen available

As time goes on, continue to fluff the pile with a hoe or pitchfork in order to keep sufficient oxygen. You should do a complete turning of the pile (so the top becomes the bottom) in spring and fall to shorten compost time.

High Nitrogen "Green" Ingredients	High Carbon "Brown" Ingredients
grass clippings	autumn leaves
weeds	straw
food wastes: fruit & vegetables, coffee grounds, tea bags, egg shells	paper towels, napkins, bags, plates, coffee filters, tissue and newspaper
manure (cow, horse, chicken, rabbit)	cornstalks
seaweed	wood chips
alfalfa hay/meal	saw dust
blood meal	pine needles



Visit Town Hall to pick up your own enclosed compost bin and kitchen scraps bucket!

M: 8am - 7pm  
 T - Th: 8am - 4pm  
 F: 8am - 1pm

Contact the Board of Health or visit the our website for more information!

508-832-7703

[www.auburnguide.com](http://www.auburnguide.com)



Do not include:

- Meat
- Bones
- Fatty or fried foods
- Oils
- Dairy Products
- Coal ashes
- Colored newspaper
- Animal wastes
- Pressure-treated/Plywood
- Anything not biodegradable

