

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DOES COMPOSTING SMELL?

No, a properly balanced compost pile should not smell. Adding “browns” and mixing your pile solves most odor issues.

HOW LONG BEFORE I CAN HARVEST COMPOST?

Look for a dark brown, crumbly material at the bottom of your pile in 6 to 12 months.

HOW MOIST SHOULD MY PILE BE?

Keep contents moist daily, like a damp sponge, but never soggy.

HOW DO I KEEP CRITTERS OUT OF MY PILE?

Leave meat, dairy, oil and fat out of your pile and cover the top with a layer of “browns.”

HOW CAN I GET RID OF FRUIT FLIES IN MY HOUSE?

Empty kitchen container at first sight of fruit flies.

HOW CAN I SPEED UP THE PROCESS?

Chop large materials into smaller pieces (less than 6 inches), mix pile once a week, toss in a handful of garden soil to introduce more microorganisms, and keep pile moist.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR IN A GOOD COMPOST BIN?

A locking lid, round shape, ventilation, and a harvest door for compost removal.

WHY, HOW AND WHAT TO COMPOST*

* A mixture of decomposed organic matter, from food waste to grass clippings



WHY COMPOST?

Composting enriches your soil, saves money on fertilizer and keeps waste out of our landfill

≈ 34%
of the average
trash can

is food and yard waste
that can be composted

The average household
composter diverts

500 LBS of organic
waste

from the South Wake
Landfill each year!



Environmental
Services

WAKE.GOV/COMPOST



Visit our website to learn more about
composting at home!

HOW TO COMPOST

1 Pick a spot

- ✓ Convenient location with easy access.
- ✓ Near a garden hose for watering.
- ✓ Flat, bare ground for good drainage.
- ✓ A shaded area can help to prevent drying out.

3 Add ingredients

- ✓ Empty your kitchen container once a week.
- ✓ Mix in new material.
- ✓ Cover food scraps with a layer of leaves or carbon-rich “browns.”

2 Collect in the kitchen

- ✓ Keep fruit flies away by using a container with a tight lid.
- ✓ Chop large items into smaller pieces under 6 inches.

4 Harvest!

- ✓ Give nature 6 to 12 months to do its work.
- ✓ Harvest when compost is dark brown and crumbly.

WHAT TO COMPOST

For best results, feed your pile a diverse diet of carbon-rich “browns” and nitrogen-rich “greens” in a ratio of 2:1.

2X

DRY BROWNS (Carbon-rich)



- ✓ Dead leaves
- ✓ Twigs
- ✓ Straw
- ✓ Sawdust, bark & wood chips
- ✓ Paper towels & napkins
- ✓ Pizza boxes
- ✓ Coffee filters
- ✓ Paper egg cartons
- ✓ Shredded paper
- ✓ Paper bags

1X

FRESH GREENS (Nitrogen-rich)



- ✓ Fruit & vegetable scraps
- ✓ Coffee grounds & tea leaves
- ✓ Dead flower blossoms
- ✓ Yard trimmings
- ✓ Grass clippings
- ✓ Rabbit, chicken & hamster droppings
- ✓ Houseplant prunings
- ✓ Rinsed, crushed eggshells
- ✓ Freezer-burned fruits & vegetables

THE FOUR SEASONS OF COMPOSTING



Spring

Add a shovel of garden soil to kick-start your pile.



Summer

Add water when drier than a wrung-out sponge.



Fall

Keep mixing and adding material!



Winter

Let your pile fill up. Decomposition slows when it's cold.

LEAVE OUT

- ✗ Meat, fish & dairy products
- ✗ Greasy food
- ✗ Bread, grains
- ✗ Cat & dog waste
- ✗ Plants treated with chemical pesticides
- ✗ Weeds gone to seed
- ✗ Diseased plants