How To Compost

A compost bin is actually a **habitat** for compost “D.O.ers” (*Decomposing Organisms*). Layer the right amounts of **air**, **water**, and **food**, and they will produce rich compost.

**Water**  **Oxygen**  **Nitrogen**  **Carbon**

Balance these inputs for successful compost!

- Too much water will make your compost slimy and smelly.
- Too much air will dry the bin and bring composting to a halt.
- Too much nitrogen (greens) will make your compost smelly.
- Too much carbon (browns) will slow composting.

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**How to Lasagna Layer**

1. **Start With Sticks**
   - 8” of criss-crossed sticks ensures airflow, just like when building a fire.

2. **Add Browns**
   - Add a layer of leaves or other carbon materials - higher on the sides, lower in the middle (bowl-shaped).

3. **Add Greens**
   - Add grass clippings, food scraps or other nitrogen materials in a thin layer in the “bowl.”

4. **Cover the Greens**
   - Add a 1-2” layer of browns - enough to completely cover the greens.

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County

LOVE YOUR COMPOST!

Master Composters of Tompkins County
Where To Compost

Composting begins in your kitchen.

1. Pick a container that's the right size to hold the amount of food scraps you produce.
2. Use a tight-fitting lid to discourage fruit flies and odors.
3. Line with newspaper to absorb moisture and make cleanup easy.

Then, it moves into a compost bin or pile of your choice.

Indoors

Outdoors

Amount of Scraps

Set-up effort

Property Size

Cost

Maintenance

My Perfect Compost Bin

Whether you place you bin in the sun or in the shade, by your back door or on the back forty, the best place for a compost bin is where you will remember to use it best.

*Sun versus shade placement only impacts moisture level. Sunny bins may dry out, shady bins may get too wet.

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County
In nature, compostable organic matter will decompose without our help, with the resulting matter going back into the environment.

Composting is the managed decomposition of organic matter:

A. We build a healthy place for decomposing organisms to do their job.

B. We feed the bin with nutritious food scraps and garden trimmings (greens & browns).

C. We make sure it has enough water and air.

D. We harvest the results to enrich our soil.

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