

Got Compost?

Stop throwing those kitchen scraps and yard trimmings away!

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, food scraps and yard trimmings constitute 23 percent of the U.S. waste stream. Reduce the amount of waste you send to the landfill—and create a rich, earthy fertilizer for your own yard—with composting. **It's easier than you might think:**

1. Pick a place for your pile.

Ideally, you'll want to place the compost as close as possible to where the waste is generated—perhaps near the back door of the house so it's accessible from the kitchen.

2. Contain your compost.

If you have the space (and your neighbors won't mind), you can create a compost pile right on the ground, no special supplies required. If you'd rather be more discreet, hide your compost in a DIY bin—you'll find instructions online for bins made from wire mesh, two-by-fours, cinder blocks, big garbage cans, and more. Don't want to make your own? Purchase a compost bin or tumbler online instead.

3. Add the ingredients.

Begin your heap with a six-inch layer of plants, sticks, or other coarse materials. Then, when possible, add kitchen scraps such as eggshells and vegetable peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds, shredded paper, dead plants (no weeds), grass clippings, and chopped leaves. (Avoid composting dairy and meat products.)

4. Maintain the pile.

Occasionally spray the heap with water so it stays moist but not soggy. Turn the pile with a pitchfork to speed up decomposition. The compost is ready when the ingredients are no longer recognizable.

For more information on home composting, visit www.epa.gov/compost or www.earth911.org.



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