

BASICS FOR BUILDING YOUR COMPOST PILE

Toledo GROWs Best Practices— Tending a Garden

Your compost pile is like a mixing bowl and oven, and the materials you add to it are the ingredients. Carbon/brown matter is the fuel, and nitrogen/green matter is the heat. Mix the two together and they combine and “cook” into a rich, nourishing food for your garden soil which then feeds your vegetable plants. The best mixture is a ratio of two thirds browns to one third greens or simply twice as much brown matter as green matter.

What you need:

- organic matter (browns and greens)
- skinny, small twigs and sticks to create airflow pockets (do not use black walnut twigs they have a small amount of toxins in them)
- moisture
- good airflow

Good Ingredients to Use:

1. Dry Brown Matter

(carbon –the fuel)

- a variety/mix of different dried leaves
- dried stalks
- dried out dead plants
- straw and hay

2. Green Matter

(nitrogen –the heat)

- green stems and leaves
- kitchen scraps (fruit and vegetable)
- coffee grounds
- tea leaves removed from the tea bag
- grass clippings from your lawn that have not been treated
(Be sure to let the grass dry out a bit and do not add it to the pile in clumps)

Do Not Add:

- Meat
- Dairy
- Cooking Oils
- Weeds or plants with seed heads
- Bind weed, thistle or horse tail grass
- Sawdust from building materials or wood shavings
- Wood or charcoal ash
- Paper cups, plates, napkins

Building a Successful Compost Pile

- At the bottom of your composter add some dried small twigs and sticks to create some airflow
- Then add a few layers of organic matter to get the pile started and continue to layer materials as you add to your pile year round
- In between each layer add in a light sprinkling of water just enough so each layer looks damp not wet
 - 1st layer small twigs and sticks
 - 2nd layer browns
 - 3rd layer greens
 - 4th layer browns

The finished compost is ready for use when it looks like a dark crumbly rich soil. If you add to your pile on an ongoing basis, extract the finished compost from the bottom of the pile for use and keep adding in new layers of material to the top of the pile as listed above.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services

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