

# Composting Benefits

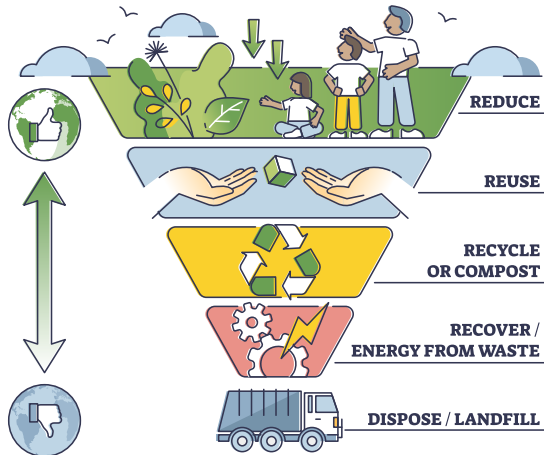
Composting recycles organic waste, such as food scraps and leaves. Completed compost can be used to improve soil quality and support plant growth.

## Composting:

### Reduces Waste

Organic waste, which includes food scraps, makes up about 1/3 of household waste. Setting up a backyard compost system will reduce the total amount of waste you throw in the trash.

### SOURCE REDUCTION



### Improves Yard & Garden Soil

Adding compost to your garden and lawn can improve soil health. Compost improves soil structure, texture, and fertility, helping plants and lawns grow. It also reduces the need to buy chemical fertilizers.

# Backyard Composting FAQ's

## My compost pile is not working fast enough.

Turning food scraps and yard waste in to compost can take 4-8 months. Check the moisture level; dry piles take longer to compost.

## My compost pile stinks.

With the right ingredients and moisture, compost should not stink. Bad odor is caused by the pile being too wet or having too many "green" materials. Turn the pile to get more air and add additional "brown" materials.

## My pile is attracting animals and/or fruit flies.

Keep materials such as meats, fats, bones, and dairy out of your compost pile. Cover food waste with brown materials and add a lid to your bin. This will prevent fruit flies.

## I am not able to set up a compost in my backyard right now.

Drop off your food waste at one of the organics drop-off sites in Saint Paul. Our citywide garbage collection also includes yard waste pick up service at an additional cost.



Use the QR code to access more information on organic drop off sites in the City of Saint Paul.

Sources: EPA, MPCA, UMN Extension



# Backyard Composting



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# Backyard Composting, Getting Started:

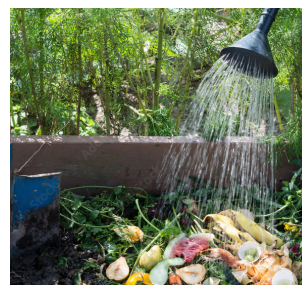
## 1 Purchase or Build a Compost Bin:

Chose a level and well-drained space in either the sun or shade to place your bin. Per Saint Paul City ordinance, the bin should be located 5 feet from property lines and 2 feet from an alley.



## 2 Add Compost Materials to Bin:

Alternate layers of "brown materials," such as dry leaves, straw, or woodchips with layers of "green materials" such as grass clippings or food scraps. Add three parts brown to one part green.



## 3 Water Lightly:

Compost materials should be moist, like a wrung-out sponge. Lightly add water if the compost matter is too dry or add more "brown" materials and turn the compost if it is too wet.



## 4 Mix Based on Container Style:

Turn, mix, or rotate your compost at least 4-8 times per month, depending on the type of compost bin. This provides better air circulation which helps speed up the compost process.



## 5 Repeat Until Complete:

Continue to add both "green" and "brown" material to your compost until its complete. This can take 4-8 months, depending on the type of compost bin. Finished compost is dark, crumbly, fresh-smelling, and no longer looks like that material you put in your bin/pile.

# What to Include in Your Backyard Compost:

## Green Material



Fruit and vegetable scraps



Green yard plant parts, such as yard waste or weeds



Coffee grounds and tea bags



Grass clippings

## Brown Material



Straw and hay



Wood shavings or chips



Leaves (raked in fall) & small sticks



Dead plants, weeds, and clippings



Shredded newspaper, cardboard, office paper

## DO NOT put in Backyard Compost



Meat, bones, fish scraps, or dairy



Fats, grease, lard, or oils



Diseased or invasive plants



Weeds gone to seed



Pet waste



Anything treated with pesticides