



**BOONE COUNTY**  
*Solid Waste Management District*

# COMPOSTING BASICS

From Garbage to Garden

## COMPOSTING

to combine a mixture that consists largely of decayed organic matter to be used for fertilizing and the conditioning of land.

## WHY COMPOST?

1. Compost is a nutrient rich material that helps plants grow in flower beds & gardens.
2. Composting keeps organic materials such as food scraps out of the landfill.
3. It's Easy!

## RECIPE FOR COMPOST

- 3 Parts of **Brown Materials** (to produce carbon)
- + 1 Part **Green Materials** (to produce nitrogen)
- + **Water** (helps breakdown organic materials)
- + **Air** (helps breakdown organic materials)

## BROWNS

Dead Leaves  
Twigs  
Sawdust  
Coffee Filters  
Stale Bread  
Crumpled/Shredded Paper, Cardboard or Newspaper

## GREENS

Fruit Peels / Rinds  
Grass Clippings  
Vegetable Scraps  
Tea & Coffee Grounds  
Egg Shells

## WATER

Keep your compost moist, but not too wet. Your compost should be kept as moist as a wrung out sponge.

## DO NOT COMPOST

Dairy Products  
Diseased Plants  
Pet Waste  
Red Meat or Fish  
Plants with Chemicals  
Bones  
Oil & Fats  
Glossy Paper  
Metal  
Glass  
Coal / Ash

## HELPFUL TIPS:

1. Composting can occur in a variety of purchased composter units or in a simple pile. The ideal size is 3'x3'x3' (1 cubic yard).
2. All materials added to the pile should be small, loose, chopped or shredded to allow for faster decomposition.
3. Be mindful of composting items with seeds (i.e. pumpkins, watermelons, etc.) Remove seeds to avoid sprouting.
4. Ventilation is important as aeration will speed up the composting process & cuts the risk of the materials creating a smell. When adding materials, be sure to turn your pile with a pitchfork or give your bin a spin to ensure proper aeration.
5. Place your bin or pile in a convenient location as you will be adding materials regularly. Consider a kitchen caddy to collect daily food scraps that can be moved to the compost pile a few times per week.
6. Good drainage is important as you want your pile to be moist, not wet. Flooded conditions will wash away imperative microbes that are needed in the composting process.
7. If you plan to vermicompost (using red wiggler earthworms), please read more on the setup of this specific process. The natural compost pile will attract worms from the surrounding area and is encouraged.
8. If you keep the 3:1 ratio, aerate and add moisture the smells and pests should be minimal.

