

BACKYARD COMPOSTING

GOOD FOR THE 'ĀINA

Compost is a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling form of decomposing organic matter. Compost is an essential part of healthy soil. About 30% of our trash is yard waste and kitchen scraps.

You can keep this organic matter out of the landfill and return it to the soil in a usable form by building a simple compost pile.

IN THE EARTH

Composting:

- Helps breakdown heavy clay soils
- Adds water and nutrient-holding capacity to sandy soil
- Builds humus in rocky soils
- Can be used as mulch to control weeds
- Returns nutrients to any soil

IN THE AIR

Composting food waste reduces methane production from landfills. When food waste decomposes without air and air-loving bacteria, it produces methane gas.

IN THE WATER

Soil rich in organic matter acts as a filter for environmental toxins. Using compost as a fertilizer will decrease the need for harmful synthetic fertilizers.



Our mission is to lead solid waste reduction education on the island of Hawai'i. **Composting is an excellent way to recover and use valuable nutrients in organic wastes to grow new plants.** Recycle Hawai'i provides island-wide presentations to schools, communities and businesses. We respond to recycling questions via our telephone and by email.

We also partner with local county, state and federal agencies; other nonprofit organizations; and community volunteers to promote waste reduction initiatives.

Please visit our display booths at community events throughout the year.

For more detailed information, visit our website at www.recyclehawaii.org.

P.O. Box 4847 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
InfoLine: 808-969-2012

www.recyclehawaii.org •
info@recyclehawaii.org

QUICK NOTES

Burning or dumping solid waste without a permit is an illegal and punishable offense.

PLEASE DON'T COMPOST

- Meat, fat, bones, fish, cooking oil
- Dairy, tofu
- Glossy paper, chemically treated wood
- Pet litter or feces, human waste
- Charcoal ashes, lime, soil, sand

**CLOSE COMPOSTING FOOD WASTE
THE RECLAIMS NUTRIENTS FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS
LOOP REDUCES GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**



VEGETABLES, FRUITS, AND FUNGI

EGGS, NUTS, COFFEE AND TEA

FOOD SOILED PAPER, CUT OR TORN PLEASE

PLAIN CARDBOARD TUBES & BOXES,

HOUSEPLANTS & SOIL



PASSIVE COMPOSTING

THE LAZY MAN'S COMPOST

Find a convenient spot at least 3-feet long and 3-feet wide. Collect green (high nitrogen) and brown (high carbon) materials which will be added in layers.

1 For the first layer, stack six inches of small branches, twigs and dry leaves on the ground.

2 Now add six inches of kitchen scraps, or 'greens.'

3 Alternate layers of green materials with layers of brown materials on top. Mixing an equal volume of brown and green materials will give the correct balance of nutrients for your compost. You can also add finished compost between layers to jump start decomposition in a compost pile by adding beneficial bacteria. Wet each layer.

Repeat the layering until the pile is about 3 feet tall (at least one cubic yard in size).

4 Cover with a 1-inch layer of old compost or dry grass clippings to minimize flies. Fresh, wet grass clippings can and does attract fruit flies. "Brown" material should be added to act as a carbon cap on the pile.

5 When the composting process is working, the pile's center will get REALLY hot: 130 - 150 degrees Fahrenheit. The pile will shrink as it decomposes.

6 Passive composting will take from two to four months, depending on size of materials (smaller pieces decompose faster than large chunks), moisture content, and outside temperature.



GET THE RECIPE

2 parts brown

Woody matter is higher in carbon. Dry grass or leaves, shredded newspaper/office paper, cardboard, mulch. Chop woody matter with a machete or lawn mower to promote faster decomposition.

1 part green

Manure and kitchen scraps are higher in nitrogen. Fresh grass clippings are also nitrogen rich. Bury kitchen scraps within the pile to avoid attracting flies or animals.

Air

The microbes that break down food and yard waste into compost need air to survive. Turning the pile (no more than once a week) will hasten decomposition.

Water

Yes, your microbes will also need water, but not too much! Keep pile moist, but not soggy. You may need to Cover pile during the hottest part of the day or in excessively rainy weather.

FINISHED COMPOST

Finished compost is called humus, and is crumbly, dark brown or black and sweet smelling.

• Spread compost on your flower or vegetable garden before turning the soil. Apply compost around flowers or between garden rows.

• Use as a mulch for bushes, trees, and plants to conserve moisture, control weeds, and insulate plant roots.

• Make a compost tea or slurry solution to feed potted plants..

• For mature plants, mix sifted compost into potting soil mixture.

• Do not use compost to germinate seeds as it may contain a fungus that could kill seedlings.



Troubleshooting

If you have	it may be	fix it by
Bad odor	Not enough air Too many greens	Turning Adding 'browns'
Slow compost	Not enough water	Moisten and turn
No heat	Not enough greens	Mix in more green materials
Not enough heat	too small	Mix in more materials
Pests	too tasty	no meat or dairy Turn Often