

# BACKYARD COMPOSTING

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Sheet  
# 2



OTTAWA VALLEY WASTE RECOVERY CENTRE

## What is COMPOSTING?

Composting is the natural process of kitchen and yard wastes breaking down into a dark nutrient-rich soil amendment.

## What are the benefits of COMPOSTING?

Composting has many benefits:

- Watch your garden grow! Compost adds nutrients to the soil, helping your plants grow. It will save you money because it reduces the need to purchase chemical fertilizers.
- It helps improve soil aeration and drainage.
- When used as a mulch it helps weed and erosion control.
- It saves valuable Landfill space and you'll be "Walking Lightly on the Environment!"

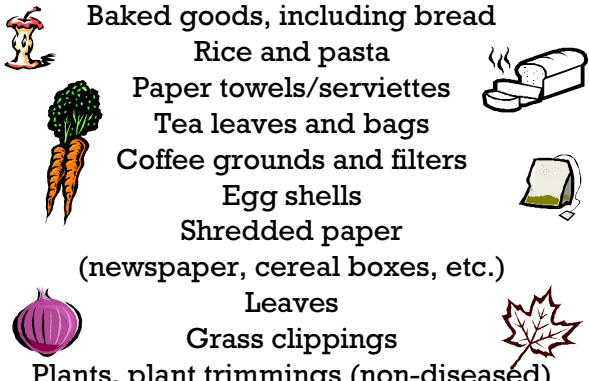


## How do I BACKYARD COMPOST (BYC)?

- **STEP # 1** You must first decide what kind of compost system you want to use. Check your local hardware store for bins manufactured specifically for BYC. You can also make a bin using simple supplies such as untreated lumber and chicken wire.
- **STEP # 2** You must then decide where to place your container. Place somewhere convenient and easy to get to, but far enough away that any odours that may be generated won't be a bother. Place it on bare ground (to allow for adequate drainage), away from large trees (they steal nutrients), in a partially sunny location and away from wooden structures that are susceptible to rot.
- You may also want to consider an area near your BYC where you can stockpile leaves and grass which can be used in the composting process.
- **STEP # 3** Keep a small container in your kitchen to hold scraps until they are ready to be taken out to the BYC. This can be lined with newspaper and should be emptied often.

**"RELAX, DON'T WORRY, COMPOST HAPPENS!!!"**

- **STEP # 4** Start building the pile. Two things will make up your pile; GREENS and BROWNS. Greens are nitrogen-rich and include kitchen waste and grass clippings. Browns are carbon rich and include leaves, straw, hay and paper. Start with a layer of browns and continue alternating layers of browns and greens.

WHAT'S IN	WHAT'S OUT
 <p>Fruit and vegetable scraps Baked goods, including bread Rice and pasta Paper towels/serviettes Tea leaves and bags Coffee grounds and filters Egg shells Shredded paper (newspaper, cereal boxes, etc.) Leaves Grass clippings Plants, plant trimmings (non-diseased)</p>	<p>All meat, including chicken Fish and shellfish Bones Fats, grease, oils All dairy products, including cheese Weeds that have gone to seed Large branches, roots, etc. Pet waste Plants sprayed with pesticides Diapers Metal and plastic Vacuum and dryer lint</p>

- **STEP # 5** Maintaining your pile. There are two things that will keep your pile working; Water and Air. Your pile should be damp like a wrung-out sponge. If it gets too dry, add some water to it. If it's too wet, add some dried leaves or straw to the pile. To add air to your pile, poke a shovel or a pitchfork into it and turn the material over. These are important for your compost pile because the microorganisms and earthworms that do all the work of breaking down your "waste" need moisture and air to stay alive. Once you start seeing your waste turn into "Black Gold" you're ready to harvest your compost and start using it on your flower and vegetable gardens!

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**My Municipality collects green carts. Why BYC?** You can use both because there are things you can put in your green cart that you can't BYC, like meat and dairy products. When you compost at home you can save the Municipality money, especially when you compost Leaf and Yard Waste and grass clippings. And you're getting free compost!!

**Can I still Compost in the winter?** Yes you can. Your compost pile is still working in the very middle, where the pile is the hottest. It will however be at a slower rate than in the summer.

**What should I do if my composter smells bad?** There are two things that might be wrong. Make sure you have enough browns and greens mixed in. Sometimes odour is created from too many greens. But more than likely your pile is lacking oxygen so simply stir the pile with a shovel or pitchfork.