

## How to Start Composting: What You Need

To create a proper compost, you're going to need a mixture of biodegradable food scraps and soil. Here are a couple of foods/household items that are compost friendly:

- Crushed eggshells
- Coffee grounds
- Plant and flower clippings
- Fruit scraps
- Straw
- Shredded newspaper
- Vegetable scraps
- Cardboard
- Tea Leaves

## How to Start a Compost Pile: Items to Avoid

Compost-friendly scraps are essential to healthy soil, here are a couple of foods/items that shouldn't be composted.

Meat of any kind, bones

- Banana peels and orange rinds that may contain pesticides
- Pet manure
- Onions and garlic
- Dairy products

### 1. Find an Appropriate Compost Spot

If possible, find a patch of bare earth to begin your compost. A flat, outdoor area will do if this isn't available. Another option is an outdoor receptacle that can sit on your deck or another part of the yard. You can use an indoor bin to keep under your kitchen sink or on the counter with the intention to add the scraps to the larger outdoor bin.

### 2. Lay Down Straw or Twigs

For proper drainage, lay down straw or twigs as the base of your pile.

### 3. Add in Compost

This is the fun part! Composting is one of the best earth day projects for kids since they'll love getting their hands dirty during this process. Try to alternate layers of wet items with dry items— i.e a layer of fruit scraps followed by a layer of shredded newspaper, etc.

### 4. Add Manure

To have super-efficient compost, you'll want to add grass/plant clippings, wheatgrass, etc. to your compost as green manure. In addition, you can also add fortified compost starters as an alternative.

### **5. Water Your Compost**

One of the most neglected aspects of learning how to start composting is forgetting to water the compost pile. So, water your compost occasionally, or if you live in a humid/rainy climate, the weather should be enough on its own.

### **6. Cover**

If possible, cover your compost pile with whatever is available. Wood or a plastic sheet will do, the main idea is to make sure that the pile is somewhat covered so that it can create its own moisture. Moreover, covering also protects your compost pile from becoming overwatered by the rain. Some compost bins are built-in with covers to speed up the process.

### **7. Turn**

One of the most important parts of learning how to start composting is committing to turn the pile every few weeks. This gives the compost pile needed oxygen to help breakdown its contents. You can do this with a shovel, or get a bin that has built-in turning handles or features. Moreover, you can get your kids involved and add it to their weekly chores list so that they'll develop a sense of responsibility for the garden.

### **8. Enjoy Your Compost!**

# COMPOSTING 101

## Greens (Nitrogen)

- Food scraps
- Vegetable scraps
- Fruit wastes
- Coffee grounds
- Tea bags/leaves
- Fresh grass clippings
- Other garden waste (plants, stalks, flowers)
- Chicken/livestock manure
- Corn husks
- Stale/moldy bread



## Browns (Carbon)

- Leaves
- Shredded straw, hay
- Sawdust
- Woody chips & twigs
- Shredded newspaper
- Nut shells
- Corn stalks and cobs
- Brown paper bags
- TP & paper towel rolls
- Crushed eggshells
- Cereal boxes
- Ashes from wood
- String/cotton thread
- Wool



## Prohibited Items

- Meat
- Fish
- Poultry
- Bones
- Milk products
- Oil
- Pet manures
- Weed seeds
- Diseased/insect infested plants
- Glossy paper
- Anything with harsh chemicals



## Troubleshooting

### Ideal N:C Ratio = 2:1

(brown material volume is packed)

**Too much Nitrogen = Smelly Compost**

**Too much Carbon = Won't break down**

**Adequate air**

**Adequate moisture**

**Roll bin around twice a week**

**Bury food scraps into can for pest control**

