



# Composting is Good for the Garden and the Environment

Compost is the product you get when you allow organic material to break down naturally into a crumbly, brown, fresh-smelling product.

Composting doesn't have to be a difficult task. It's easy to do, good for the environment, and great for your garden.

## Why Compost?

Composting is good for several reasons:

- Composting diverts organic waste from the waste stream, saving space in our landfill. This saves us all money by extending the life of our local landfill.
- It's free! Why spend money at the store on something you can make for free at home?
- Grass clippings and leaves can become a source of nutrient pollution when rain water carries them into local bodies of water via the storm drainage system. Nutrient pollution can cause aquatic oxygen depletion and fish kills. Composting these types of yard waste helps prevent nutrient pollution.
- Compost has been shown to naturally clean up certain types of contaminated soil.
- Compost enriches soils, making a good foundation for healthy plants, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, water and pesticides.
- It recycles nutrients from decaying plants back into the soil so that new plants can use them. Mother Nature's fertilizer is the best fertilizer you'll ever find.
- Compost helps conserve water. Soil treated with compost is better able to hold water. Fertile soil has far greater moisture retention, allowing you to use less water in your garden.
- Compost can act as a buffer to level out the soil's pH.
- It can also increase your garden's resistance to parasites and disease. Healthy soil creates healthy plants!

## How to Compost in your Backyard?

While there are different ways to make a compost pile, we suggest that you follow these general guidelines for establishing a backyard pile.

- Select a dry, shady spot for your compost pile or bin.
- Add brown and green materials as they are collected, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.
- Moisten dry materials as they are added.
- Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
- When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years.



**Mandy Smith-Thompson, Environmental Educator holds a handful of leaves, grass clippings and kitchen waste –materials used to start a healthy compost pile!**



[Click Here](#) to watch the *Backyard Composting Workshop* hosted by Concord Environmental Educator – Mandy Smith-Thompson and David Goforth, Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension Agent.

