

Tips and Troubleshooting



Ammonia odor: Too many green materials (nitrogen).

Solution: add brown materials (carbon) such as leaves, straw, sawdust, newspaper, or hay.

Rotten odor: Too much moisture or overly compacted.

Solution: add dry materials, turn pile, and cover pile with a tarp when it rains/snows.



Pests: Certain foods are not decomposing properly OR food waste is too exposed

Solution: 1. Remove meat, oily foods, or dairy products from the compost pile.

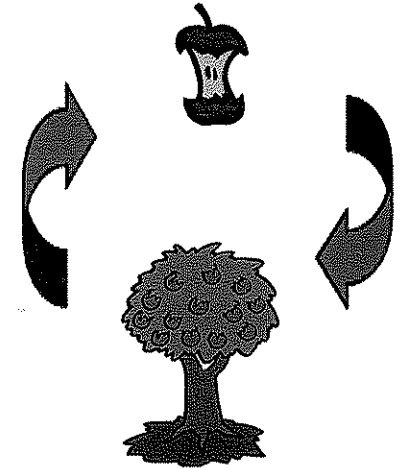
2. Keep a layer of leaves or other brown material over the compost pile at all times

Slow Decomposition: Low temperature and low biotic activity

Solution: adjust the carbon/nitrogen ratio by adding more nitrogen materials, add moisture if too dry, and aerate.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
City of Oberlin
85 South Main Street
Oberlin, OH 44074

Guide to Home Composting



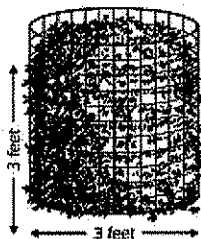
**City of Oberlin
Public Works Department
and
New Agrarian Center**



How to Compost:

What you need:

-A holding bin. Available materials, such as a circle of wire, pallets, or aerated plastic tubs make simple, inexpensive bins, or one can be purchased.



-*Ingredients:* kitchen and yard waste (see below). Aim to have a carbon to nitrogen ratio of about 30:1 in your compost pile. Leaves, hay, straw, sawdust, bread, and newspapers provide carbon. Most kitchen wastes provide nitrogen to the mix.

-*Moisture:* It is important not to let your compost pile get too wet. A tarp or a layer of dry leaves can help with this.

-*Oxygen:* Turn your compost pile regularly to keep the microorganisms happy and help your compost decompose faster.



Using Compost

Home compost usually takes about 6 months to fully break down. Once it is fully decomposed into soil, add it to your garden as fertilizer or use it when potting plants. Especially here in Oberlin where our soil is often so lacking in organic material, compost is a valuable soil amendment that can greatly increase the health and productivity of your plants. Compost adds important nutrients to your soil and helps loosen heavy clay soils.

What to compost:

Kitchen waste:

Vegetable and fruit peels/scraps, such as apple cores and onion peels
Spoiled fruits and vegetables
Coffee grounds and tea bags
Old bread
Egg shells
Shredded newspapers, paper bags, and paper egg cartons.



(Keep a container with a lid in the kitchen to collect compostable materials. Empty it into your compost pile as often as you empty your trash.)

Yard waste:

Leaves
Hay and straw
Grass clippings

What NOT to compost:

Meat, oil, and dairy products.
Pet wastes.

(These items can make your compost smell bad and attract animals.)

How does it work?

-Give your compost pile enough ingredients, not too much moisture, and turn it occasionally. With the help of microbial decomposers, natural biological processes will turn your wastes back into soil.

Why should I compost?

-It provides a free and valuable soil amendment.

-It slows the expansion of landfills. Yard wastes and kitchen scraps make up 20-30% of household waste.

More information:

-The City of Oberlin offers a more detailed brochure on composting.

- Trouble-shooting information and a list of helpful tips are available from the Lorain County Solid Waste Management District:

1-800-449-5462

-www.mastercomposter.com

If you have additional questions or need help getting started, please call 775-7218. Many Oberlinians already compost at home and we can help you compost too!

Sponsored by:

Lorain County Solid Waste Management District and City of Oberlin Public Works Dept.