



What is Compost?

Compost is a dark, crumbly, and earthy smelling form of decomposing organic matter.

Why Should I Make Compost?

Composting is the most practical and convenient way to handle your yard and organic kitchen wastes. **It can also reduce your household garbage by up to 30%.** Compost improves your soil and the plants growing in it. If you have a garden, a lawn, trees, shrubs, or even planter boxes, you have a use for compost.

Organic matter in the soil improves plant growth by 1) helping to break up heavy clay soils and improving their structure, 2) adding water and nutrient-holding capacity to sandy soils and 3) adding essential nutrients.

Do It Yourself... Or Not

If you'd rather not deal with a backyard setup, you can still separate organic material from your trash. The Transfer Station has a compost bin, and permit holders can dump their compostables for FREE. Get information on Marbletown's ECC page, or ask the Transfer Station staff.



Source information for this brochure:

Cornell Cooperative Extension
cwmi.css.cornell.edu/compostbrochure.pdf

and Earth Machine™
www.earthmachine.com/how_to_compost.html

Brochure design: New Paltz Recycling Center

Marbletown is a New York State
Climate Smart Community.

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/50845.html>



BACKYARD COMPOSTING



Information from the Marbletown
Environmental Conservation
Commission and the Lou Gross
Memorial Transfer Station



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Town of Marbletown

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Transfer Station

135 Canal Road, High Falls, NY 12404

Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, 8a-3:45p

What to Compost

Your compost bin will work best if it is fed a diet of green (nitrogen-rich) and brown (carbon-rich) materials. Check out the list of kitchen and yard waste “greens” and “browns”.

KITCHEN “GREENS”

Fruit & vegetable scraps
Coffee grounds
Rice & pasta
Egg Shells



KITCHEN “BROWNS”

Coffee filters, stale bread,
paper napkins & towels,
staple-less tea bags, hair.



YARD “GREENS”

Vegetables
Plant trimmings
Hedge clippings
Grass (small amounts)



YARD “BROWNS”

Leaves
Straw or hay
Small twigs/chips
Dried grass and weeds



How to Compost

Composting is easy – it happens on its own. However, there are a few things you can do to speed up the composting process. Just follow these four steps:



CHOP

Chop up larger items like watermelon rinds or corn cobs before putting them in a container or directly into your compost bin.



Starter Mix

Start with a layer of dirt in the bottom of your compost bin. Add “greens” (egg shells, food scraps); cover with “browns” (napkins, leaves) and put cover back on container.

Mixture should be kept moist – like a damp sponge. Moisture and air are the key elements to a successful backyard composting program.



STIR

Mix the new material into the existing pile using a pitchfork or other garden tool. This also adds oxygen, which is a key component to successful composting.



COVER

Cover your food waste with a handful of old leaves, other dried yard waste or soil. This will add carbon and reduce the chance of odors and fruit flies. Then put the lid back on and let it “cook”.

Harvesting Your Compost

After a few months, the kitchen scraps near the bottom of your compost bin will have decomposed and will look much like soil. There are two ways of harvesting this finished compost: (1) just scoop a few shovels of compost through the compost bin door, or (2) lift the compost bin up and use as much finished compost as possible.



You may want to use what’s known as a trommel screen to separate unfinished material from finished compost.

TIP: You can make your own trommel screen in minutes with 1/4 inch hardware cloth or old wire fencing and a wood frame.



Compost Problems and Solutions

SYMPTOM	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
The compost has bad odor.	Not enough air.	Turn it and add coarser material. Sticks, wood chips, etc.
The center of the pile is dry.	Not enough water.	Moisten material while turning the pile.
The compost is damp and warm in the middle but nowhere else.	Pile is too small.	Collect more material and mix old material in with the newer.
The heap is damp and sweet smelling, but still will not heat up.	Lack of nitrogen.	Add fresh grass clippings, fresh manure, vegetable scraps, coffee grounds.