

HOW DO I MAINTAIN MY PILE?

WHAT GOES IN THE PILE

Put **stalky material** like large sticks or stones in the bottom of the bin. This will allow air to flow through the bottom of your pile.

Compost Component	Source
Oxygen	Air and turning
Water	Rain (add water in very dry conditions)
Carbon (Brown material)	Fallen leaves, paper, wood chips, hay, straw, old grass clippings. Most organic material that has a brown color will work.
Nitrogen (Green material)	Grass clippings, fresh leaves, food scraps. Most living organic matter will work.

Learn what your compost pile needs to survive. Your job is to make sure your compost receives each of these components. There should be approximately three buckets of carbon (browns) in your pile for every bucket of nitrogen (greens).

LEARN TO LAYER

Learn how to layer your compost to maximize air space and minimize smell. If this step is done correctly, your compost **will not smell**. Start with a layer of **carbon** materials on top of the stalky material. Mold it into a bowl shape. Then add some **nitrogen** materials to the middle of the bowl. Promptly after adding the nitrogen, cover it with carbon materials so that there are **no greens (nitrogen) showing** at all. This will eliminate odors and rodents. Whenever you add nitrogen material to the compost, immediately cover it with carbon materials. Nitrogen “green” layers should be 1-2 inches thick and carbon “brown” layers should be 2-3 times as thick as green layers.



A GUIDE TO BACKYARD COMPOSTING

Our Mission

To Protect and Enhance the Natural Resources of Chemung County by:

"Developing partnerships and networks and by implementing innovative solutions to our Natural Resource Concerns."

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GOING GREEN IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD!

HOME COMPOSTING: SOME BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT IS COMPOST?

Compost simply means controlled decomposition. For homeowners, it means putting all your organic waste (leaves, garden waste, food waste, etc) together and decomposing it in a controlled environment. The result is compost, a nutrient-rich garden amendment.



www.lanecove.nsw.gov.au
Compost typically produced in a backyard compost system.

WHY COMPOST ?

- It's a responsible convenient way to get rid of your organic materials. You can put a compost pile right in your backyard for easy waste disposal.
- Once all the organic material has decomposed, it creates a nutrient-rich substance that will help your flowers, vegetables, and potted plants thrive.
- Organic waste that is put out on the curb or thrown into a stream can pollute the municipal water supply.



www.deptford-nj.org

You can easily deal with organic waste like leaves with a compost pile.

Nutrients leach out of organic waste and into flowing rain or stream water, thus changing the normal nutrient content of the water.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

To get started you will need a bin in your backyard and organic waste. Some people turn the contents of their compost bin once or twice a year. This will help speed up the process but is not necessary. You do not need to turn your compost as long as you follow the bin layering instructions in this pamphlet. You may also need a couple of tools to harvest the compost, such as a hoe and shovel. Composting is an easy and sustainable practice to adopt in your home. It is not expensive or labor intensive.



www.greenprophet.com

This is one of the many kinds of compost bins available for backyard composting.

If you follow the instructions provided by Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, it won't smell or attract animals. Compost itself is a valuable resource for your home and garden. So check it out and see if it's something you could do!

COMPOST FACTS

- Food and paper are the two largest contributors to landfill, and make up more than half of all landfill waste – more than all plastics, diapers, Styrofoam, and tires, COMBINED. Both food and paper can go into the compost
- Compost is organic – not a chemical fertilizer
- The average American produces 4 lbs of landfill waste every day – that's more than 87,000 lbs over a lifetime.

Source: www.smarthome.duke.edu

HOW DO I START?

CHOOSE YOUR BIN

There are many kinds of compost bins. A more complete guide to compost systems is available through Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District. Here are a couple of recommended bins:



www.ehow.com

Welded Wire – These are cheap and easy to use. You should purchase 11-12 feet of welded wire fence and assemble it in a circle. Bins should be about 3 feet in diameter and 3 feet tall. Use short lengths of wire, plastic-coated twist-ties, or nylon string to tie the cylinder closed. When the compost is full, untie the strings, pick up the bin, and move it to a new location to start up a new pile.

Plastic Bin – There are a variety of plastic compost bins for sale, for \$20 - \$150 per bin. These bins help maintain an aesthetic backyard and are simple to use. However, if you have a high volume of waste, this type of bin may be too small for you.



www.flickr.com



www.gardengrowth.com

Pallet Bin – These wooden bins can be very convenient for composting. They are often built with a removable side so that turning and harvesting compost is easy. Placing one or more adjacent to one another allows for transfer of compost from one bin to another. However, homeowners must construct these bins themselves, which can be labor intensive. Space must be left between the wooden slats to allow air to enter.