The Essentials of **Composting**

MOISTURE

Decomposer organisms also need water to compost efficiently. The compost pile should be watered periodically, depending upon temperatures and rainfall. A moisture content of 40% is desired. This is the moisture content of a damp sponge.

AIR

Like most living creatures, the decomposer organisms need oxygen to survive. A properly aerated (aerobic) pile will compost faster and more thoroughly than an oxygen-starved (anaerobic) pile. The pile is aerated when you turn and mix the material. The pile should be turned every one to two weeks to maintain proper aeration.

SURFACE AREA

It is best to have your materials properly shredded before putting them into a compost pile. Doing so will increase the surface area that hte decomposer organisms have to feed upon, which makes the organisms more efficient and able to create compost faster. Always mow or chop up material before it is added to the compost pile. Proper particle size reduction can be explained by an analogy using a block of ice. A block of ice will melt very slowly. Crush that same amount of ice, and it will melt much more quickly. The same principle works for a compost pile. A large piece of organic material will decompose slowly, taking longer to compost. that same item, when chopped up,

TO MAKE COMPOST COLLECTING EASIER - TRY A KITCHEN COMPOST!

SYMPTOM	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
The pile smells bad	•Too much moisture •Too much nitrogen-rich materials in the pile	• Turn the pile • Do not water as often and turn the pile to dry out the material • Add leaves and/or shredded paper.
The pile will not get hot	•Not enough water •Pile too small • Not enough nitrogen-rich materials in the pile. • Patricle size too large.	• Add water. • Gather more mateiral and built the pile to at least 3' x 3' x 3'. • Mix in fresh nitrogen-rich materials, such as grass or fruit and vegetable trimmings. • Chop or grind materials to reduce the particle size.
The pile attracts flies, rodents, or other pests.	• Protein-rich, fatty, or sugary foods that are present in the pile • Food is exposed.	• Be sure to leave meat, bones, oily foods, and dairy products out of the compost pile. • Bury the fruit and vegetable trimmings at least 6-12 inches deep.

Composting
Questions & Answers

DO COMPOST

NITROGEN

- Fruit & Vegetable scraps
- Flowers
- Coffee Grounds
- Weeds
- Barnyard Manure
- Grass Clippings
- Sod

CARBON

- Ash
- Bread
- Coffee Filters
- Dry Leaves
- Egg Shells
- Hair
- Shredded Paper
- Sawdust
- Tea Bags

DO NOT COMPOST

- Bones
- Cat Litter
- Chicken
- Diapers
- Diseased Plants
- Dog or Cat Feces
- Meat
- Oils & Fats
- Peanut Butter
- Salad Dressing
- Dairy Products

ORGANIC MATERIALS

These are your yard clippings and the food that the decomposer organisms feed on, turning them into compost. The materials that are suitable for composting are either carbon materials (brown and dry) or nitrogen materials (green and moist).

Carbon Materials
Include fallen leaves, sawdust, and dry grass clippings.

Nitrogen Materials
Include freshly cut green grass and fruit and vegetable scraps

JUST ADD WATER AND STIR

Composting is a very basic process. You can simply put yard clippings into a pile and let nature do the rest in its own time. Compost will happen; yet it wll will happen very slowly. You can help it along by providing a balanced diet and an enriched environment for the organisms that do the work of composting.

Decomposter organisms are made up of both microorganisms, such as bacteria, and macroorganisms, such as worms. supplying them with their basic needs, food, water, and air, will increase the efficiency of their compost efforts.

FOR ONLINE INTERACTIVE GUIDE FOLLOW THIS LINK
HTTP://www.aerobin400.com/aerobin400-usa/compostsimulator.aspx