



## WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the process that occurs when bacteria in soil break down or decompose biodegradable trash and organic material. Compost (Organic Fertilizer) is the rich, dark, crumbly material that results in nature's own nutrient-rich slow release fertilizer. responsible to collect, transport and dispose of solid waste.

## WHAT TO COMPOST?

Kitchen waste (vegetable, fruit & fruit scraps) leaves & grass clippings yard trimmings (old plants, small pruning's) Weeds, wood and bush chips, old potted soil, manure and shredded paper.

## WHAT NOT TO COMPOST?

Disease or insect infected plants  
Harmful weeds and seeds  
Pet or human bodily waste  
Meat scraps, fats, grease or oils  
Dairy products  
Household chemicals  
Non-organics (plastics, metals or glass)

## WHY COMPOST?

- Lowers water bill. Soil mixed with compost retains water better than regular soil.
- Saves money on fertilizer and yard supplies.
- Provides an environmentally sound disposal alternative.
- Improves the physical environment
- Reduces the volumes of curbside collection.
- Saves waste transportation and disposal costs.
- Reduces the waste going to the landfills.
- Produces nutritional material which improves soil structure and promotes healthy plant growth

## HOW DOES IT WORK? ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS

### Biodegraders

These micro-organisms bacteria, fungi, molds, earthworms, insects and other soil organism eat the organic material you place in your compost pile.

### Organic Material

Organic material high in nitrogen (green) and carbon (dry plant) feed the micro-organisms living in your compost pile.

### Air

The organisms in your pile need air in order to break down the organic material. By turning turning your pile with a fork or hoe, you create space/passage for the pile to breathe.

### Moisture

The pile should be damp like wrung out sponge, not wet. As the pile heats up, the moisture will evaporate, so add water during

dry spells. Covering your pile helps retain moisture during hot weather.

### Time and Temperature

The more heat entrapped in the composting process, the faster the breakdown process. A properly compost pile reaches a temperature of 130 to 160 degrees Fahrenheit and will kill weed seeds at that heat level.

## COMPOST RECIPE

### Ingredients

Yard and kitchen waste, air, water, soil and or compost to introduce micro-organisms necessary for decomposition. Plastic or metal tin (min. size 3ft by 3ft).

### Directions

1. Mix yard and kitchen waste in a bin or pile.
2. Add a shovel or two of soil, compost and or manure.
3. Add bulky material like wood chips.
4. Add water as needed to moisten the pile, not wet, to keep pile loose to avoid matting to allow air to infiltrate.
5. Mix in food scraps and other materials as generated.
6. Turn thoroughly one weekly. Turning allows for thorough decomposition, prevents overheating and speeds up the composting process.
7. Leave for 5-8 weeks and turn thoroughly once weekly.

### Prepare for use

After allotted time, most of the material at bottom of pile will be dark rich and sweet smelling soil. Sift or sort out large decomposed material. Mix compost with your yard and garden soil.





## DIFFERENT WAYS TO COMPOST

There are a variety of ways to reuse your yard trimmings. The best compost method depends on your individual needs and resources.

### Mulching

Simply spread leaves and grass clippings around the base of plants a few inches from the stem. Yard trimmings work first as a mulch to retain moisture then decompose into a soil amendment.

### Heaps & Piles

Combine organic material together in a heap/pile measuring about five feet wide and 3 feet tall. Add material as it becomes available. Moisten the pile and turn regular.

### Planting Spots

Dig a hole in the ground at least 8" deep and place kitchen scraps. Fill and cover the hole then use as a plant base.

### Composting Bins

Add organic material to the bin as generated. Enclose bins to keep pets out and to hold heat and moisture. Backyard composting is the most economical way to reduce organic material going into the landfill while preserving natural resources. Anything growing in your backyard is potential compost material.



Contact us at:  
1888.253.2652 / 448.3220  
Email: [nswma@nswma.gov.jm](mailto:nswma@nswma.gov.jm)

Symptoms	Problems	Solutions
The compost has a bad odour	Too wet. Not enough air.	Add coarse dry material and mix.
The centre of the pile is dry or white mould appears.	Too much coarse woody material Not enough	Chop/shred the coarse material. Add fresh green waste. Turn and moisten the ingredients.
The heap is damp and sweet smelling, but will not heat up.	Lack of nitrogen	Mix in nitrogen source like fresh grass clippings or fresh manure.
The heap is damp or warm in the middle but dry everywhere else.	Pile is too small or too dry	Collect more material. Mix and moisten new and old material into larger pile.



# COMPOSTING