

Composting: Nature's Own Recycling Program

An estimated one-third of our existing landfills will reach full capacity in the next five to seven years. Approximately 20 to 30 per cent of this waste is made up of organic materials from the yard and kitchen that can be recycled easily.

With space hard to come by and time running out, several states in the U.S., including New Jersey, Florida and Minnesota have banned the disposal of yard waste in landfills. If you can't take your leaves and grass clippings to the dump, then what do you do with them? Composting is the answer.

Composting is the process of turning organic materials you normally throw away - things like leaves and grass clippings - into a rich soil nutrient called humus.

When used as a soil amendment,

humus does wonders for your garden. An application of healthy humus supplies your soil with much of the nutrients found in fertilizers. It also increases moisture retention and improves water and air movement in soils lacking these qualities. In addition, finished compost acts as the great equalizer by bringing the pH of any soil closer to neutral.

Years ago, composting got a bad name. Compost piles were unsightly, mal-odorous and hard to maintain. That's all changed now. Hi-tech, factory-made bins, such as the new Flowtron Compost Bin (CB-50), have taken care of the sight and smell, while their improved design has made the process easier.

How it Works

The inside of a compost heap is hot. As the organic matter decomposes, tempera-

tures inside rise beyond 140 degrees Fahrenheit, killing weed seeds, disease organisms and eventually even the bacteria that cause the transformation. The end result is humus.

Nearly anything that was once alive can be added to a compost pile. Besides leaves, branches and grass clippings, kitchen wastes, such as coffee grounds, vegetable and fruit peels and tea leaves, are also appropriate for composting. However, avoid including grease, fat, meat scraps and bones because they may attract insects and vermin or produce undesirable odors.

Setting Up the Pile

The location of a compost pile can be key. Select a level, well-drained spot, preferably in full sun. Make sure the pile is accessible and the contents are easy to

get at. Accessibility and ease-of-use have caused many gardeners to turn to commercially designed compost bins. In particular, the bin manufactured by Flowtron is made of recycled plastic, has removable slats for easy access and, when connected to a second bin, can be expanded into a larger configuration. The sleek-looking Flowtron bin also solves the problem of the compost pile eyesore.

The ideal way to construct a compost pile is to begin with a bottom layer of brush, which holds it above ground and aerates it. Then "sandwich" layers of green wastes (grass clippings, garden weeds, plant tops and vegetable parings) with layers of brown or carbonaceous material like leaves, chipped branches and sawdust. If the materials you use are dry, wet them down with water as you add them.

HELPING TO CLEAN UP OUR ENVIRONMENT

REDUCE

1. Support the efforts of all concerned to reduce the amount of packaging in the waste stream.
2. Removal of Household Hazardous Waste.
3. Encourage residents to purchase home composters.
4. Waste reduction schools "garbageless lunches".
5. Continue the policy of charging high fees at disposal facilities thus providing a monetary incentive to reduce.

1. Donate clothing and other items through C.
2. Implement measures for re-using material.
3. Encourage people to "lug-a-mug" to meeti
4. Photocopying and printing on both sides o
5. Foster the expansion of the waste exchan
6. Commercial/Industrial Waste Audits.



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