



VILLAGE OF HALES CORNERS

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COMPOSTING

Composting is the natural recycling process that you can begin at home with leaves, grass clippings, and other lawn and garden waste. Natural microorganisms from the ground interact with compost materials to help break down plant matter. Proper moisture, air, and temperature aid these natural microorganisms in their work. Naturally fortified with nutrients, the finished compost is ready for use as an organic plant food and soil amendment in as little as 4-5 weeks.

Why Compost?

- It improves soil drainage in clay and retains moisture in sand to decrease watering needs and nutrient leaching.
- It suppresses certain plant diseases.
- It reduces demand for pesticides/fungicides by adding beneficial microbes and fungi to the soil.
- It can boost crop and flower yields.
- It recovers valuable organic waste from the yard and kitchen.
- It prevents soil erosion.
- It reduces the amount of fertilizer required for plants, saves money and the environment.
- It improves soil structure.
- It recycles organic matter back into the soil where it improves overall soil health.
- It saves landfill space and reduces methane production.

Getting Started

1. Gather green and brown yard waste. Green yard waste is high in nitrogen (N) and includes grass clippings, fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps, sod, weeds (do not compost annual weeds that have gone to seed or plants that spread by underground roots or runners), and manure from plant eating animals. Brown yard waste is high in carbon (C) and includes shredded paper, leaves, pine cones and needles (should be shredded and not make up more than 10% of the mix), and sawdust and wood shavings (are high in C and will require extra N (green materials), do not use sawdust from pressure treated wood).
2. In a heap or bin mix two parts brown yard waste with one part green yard waste.
3. Adding a small amount of garden soil and chopping up leaves before mixing them into the pile will both speed the composting process.
4. Add water so compost is kept as moist as a rung-out sponge.
5. Turn the pile every week. (Not necessary, but will speed the process)
6. When the ingredients are black and no longer recognizable you have finished compost. This will take between 4 weeks to one year depending on frequency of turning and how well you maintain the moisture of the pile.