

COMPOSTING

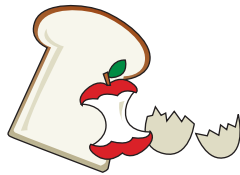
Provides compost which enriches soil and reduces waste to landfill



YES

GREEN MATERIAL

- ✓ thin layers grass/lawn clippings
- ✓ green leaves
- ✓ horse, cow, sheep and poultry manures
- ✓ kitchen wastes (mixed with drier materials)
 - fruit and vegetable scraps
 - tea bags & coffee grounds
 - egg shells
 - bread
- ✓ hair



BROWN MATERIAL

- ✓ dry garden plants and flowers
- ✓ moistened hay/straw
- ✓ paper & cardboard
- ✓ thin layers of leaves & bark
- ✓ vacuum cleaner waste



NO

- ✗ fatty food wastes
- ✗ meat scraps
- ✗ milk products
- ✗ weeds that have gone to seed
- ✗ diseased plants
- ✗ human wastes
- ✗ glossy magazines
- ✗ bones
- ✗ pernicious weeds
- ✗ pet wastes
- ✗ chemically treated wood
- ✗ oil



What can you do?

Purchase a compost bin from the Council.
Attend a Composting Workshop run by Nedlands Earth Carers,
contact Earth Carers on 9387 0922 for details.



City of Nedlands

PO Box 9, Nedlands WA 6909
Phone 9386 6900 Fax 9386 3670

STEPS TO MAKING COMPOST

1. Choose a sunny site that is close to the kitchen.
2. Break up the soil around the area where you want to place the bin, and bury the bottom edge 3-5 centimetres underground.
3. The first layer should comprise of leaves, twigs and other dry compostible materials, such as shredded paper or cardboard. This provides aeration. Moisten this well.
4. Add a layer of **green** material, such as kitchen scraps, green leaves, grass clippings or spent cut flowers.
5. Follow with a **brown** layer – consisting of dry leaves, straw, or shredded newspaper. Brown materials should always be moistened after they are added.
6. Continue alternating **green** and **brown** layers over time until the bin is almost full, then cover with a 5 cm layer of garden soil or finished compost. This is important as it contains many beneficial microorganisms that help to speed up the composting process.
7. It is important to add air to the compost so it doesn't smell. This can be done by occasionally turning it with a garden fork or using a hanging basket hook, which is plunged into the compost and pulled out. It is not essential, but will speed up the process.
8. The compost will be ready in approximately 2-3 months. (Faster in summer, longer in winter). The compost is ready when it smells earthy, has a crumbly texture and there are no readily identifiable food products. Some materials that are not as readily compostible (such as straw, twigs, eggshells or corncobs) may be visible. These can either be placed aside for the next batch of compost, or allowed to break down fully in the garden.
9. Repeat, and enjoy the benefits of compost, while knowing you are helping reduce the amount of green waste going to landfill.



HOW TO USE COMPOST



Use instead of potting mix for planting seedlings



Encourage healthy plant growth by digging in a layer of compost around the drip line in trees.



Compost can be applied twice a year to natives and as a top dressing for lawns.

More detailed information and help is available from Nedlands Earth Carers on 9387 0922 (Amanda).

FIX-IT GUIDE



Smelly compost?

Your compost can start to smell if it gets too wet or if there is not enough air in the heap. A common cause is putting in too much food waste and not enough dry ingredients.

FIX IT!

Fork in dry leaves, garden mulch or straw.

Garden lime, dolomite or wood-fire ash added to the heap will also 'sweeten' it (lime reduces the acidity caused by excessive nitrogen-rich materials, which are green materials as per the steps to making compost).

Turn the compost to get more air in.

Combine green ingredients with sawdust or shredded newspaper before adding to the heap.

Compost should be about as wet as a wrung out sponge. To test, pick up a handful and squeeze firmly. Water should appear at the surface, but not form large drips.

Unwelcome visitors?

Ants, cockroaches, mice or rats can sometimes make your compost their home.

Do not despair, there are millions of friendly creatures in your compost heap and some simple methods can get rid of the unwelcome ones.

FIX IT!

Always ensure food in the heap is covered – a layer of newspaper, mulch or soil can be used.

Adding lime and turning the heap discourages ants and cockroaches.

Avoid placing dairy products, meat and seafood in the compost.

Placing fine wire mesh under the compost bin will help keep out mice and rats.

Compost slow to mature?

If your composting system can't keep up with demand there are ways to make great compost quicker. A slow composting system can mean that the compost is not hot enough, or there may not be enough air or water.

FIX IT!

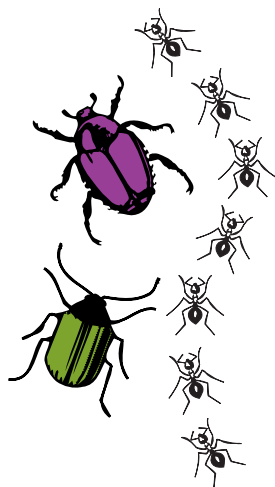
Adding green material, in the form of animal manure (such as chicken or horse) or commercial products such as blood and bone, can speed up the composting process.

Turn the heap and add water.

There are plenty of good publications on composting. Try your local library or call a Nedlands Earth Carer on 9387 0922 (Amanda).

HINT:

Some people prefer to have two bins in use. As soon as the first bin is full, leave it to mature, meanwhile start the process again in the other bin.



HINT:

Small items will decompose faster. If possible, chop materials into pieces as small as possible. This will help to speed up the process. Use the lawn mower to chop up coarse garden prunings.