

Anyone Can Compost

Why compost?

If you garden, adding compost with a good balance of kitchen waste and yard waste will have many benefits.

- **Compost adds nutrients to the soil.** Compost is full of nutrients, such as carbon and nitrogen, that are essential to plants for growth and photosynthesis. It also helps soil retain water. All this decreases or eliminates the need for factory-made fertilizers and chemicals.
- **It introduces valuable organisms to the soil.** Microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and protozoa, decompose organic material. The presence of microorganisms is vital because they aerate the soil -- which speeds up the composting process, converts nitrogen to a usable form, and repels some plant diseases.



Even if you do not garden, composting is beneficial.

- **Composting keeps a significant amount of waste out of your kitchen trash can.** This reduces the amount of trash in your home. Just think – fewer trash bags to buy and fewer trips out to the trash bin.
- **Composting reduces total landfill waste.** This benefits the township's budget because compostable refuse is estimated to be approximately 20% of what goes in the landfill, and landfill charges to the township are based on cost per ton. Less kitchen and yard waste means lower charges to the township, and thus to you.

How do I compost?

Whether you live in an apartment or a house with a yard, there are ways to compost your kitchen and table scraps.

[Composting outside](#) in your yard is traditional, but it is not the only place! You can compost on your balcony, in your kitchen, in your garage or even in your living room. It can be as simple as finding a shady corner in the yard. Some municipalities in larger cities even have a central collection system to turn your scraps into compost.



These sites have some great information on composting indoors:

- [In an apartment or on a balcony](#)
- [Composting indoors with worms](#) or “vermiculture.” (No, it’s NOT gross!)
- [Composting indoors](#) - without any smell

What can I compost? Can I just load up with food scraps?

Along with food scraps you will need dry material and good bacteria or worms to get the process going.

Whichever method you choose, you will need 3 ingredients:

- 1/3 nitrogen-rich greens from your kitchen - veggie peelings, leftover food;
- 2/3 “brown” material – carbon-rich, dry material such as dried leaves, shredded paper, or sawdust;
- A way to get it going – worms, a layer of soil/mature compost, or some compost starter from your garden center

You can also cut up and compost **clothing made from natural materials (e.g. 100% cotton, bamboo)** that have not been treated, or **new ‘plastic’ cups that are marked compostable** -- but they will take a very long time to break down. If you have a large compost pile and lots of patience you can include them.

Larger pieces = longer composting time, so chop up your peels. Many people keep a small bin on the kitchen counter top to collect scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves etc. You can get bins with a carbon filter to prevent unwanted odors.

What should I *not* compost?

- Do not compost meat or fatty foods. They take too long to break down and can attract rodents;
- Do not add liquids, as they affect the moisture balance;
- Metal, plastic, non-organic material will not compost, ever.

What is the easiest way to compost in my yard?

Dig a hole at least 8 inches deep, to keep animals from getting to the scraps. If you have a sunny corner, away from the house, simply toss your food scraps into your sunny spot.

Break your scraps up with your spade, cover with soil, and turn the whole thing over every 4-7 days until it begins to break down. Then leave it to mature into a rich, brown compost.

Keep the moisture balance right by adding more green or brown material (your compost should feel like a damp sponge). When the balance is right, bacteria will warm up the compost as they do their work.

I don't want my compost on the ground. Are there other options?

- You can use a plastic bin with air holes for your compost materials, just turn it all periodically. You may want to use a 2 or 3 stage bin system for larger piles.
- You can use a tumbling composter where you just rotate the bin every few days.
- You can use a large compost bin with a net over the top to stop insects getting in.
- If you search for "How To Compost Outside," you will see many other options.
- Remember you can also compost small amounts of kitchen scraps inside with composting worms, or [vermiculture](#). Worm composting bins are easy and perfect for apartments.



Read about the methods, select one that works for you and **get composting!** After 3-4 weeks, you should have a lovely pile of glorious compost.

Useful links to get started - many more exist:

- [Kitchen composting: How to compost food scraps from the kitchen](#)
- [How to make a \\$10 compost bin](#)
- [Composting saves money](#)

YARD WASTE COMPOSTING AVAILABLE IN WEST BRADFORD

Remember that West Bradford will [compost your leaves and branches](#) - and you can pick up the finished product there as well!

