

Composts and composts making:

IN AND AROUND COMPOST INFORMATION : SHORT QUIZ- TRUE OR FALLS

- _____ Compost is a living ecosystem that supports a complex web of microbes and other organisms.
- _____ Meat, cheese, oily foods can be used to make compost.
- _____ Paper, napkins, towel, can't be used to make compost.
- _____ Compost provides nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur and microorganisms that are essential for plant growth.
- _____ Compost is 'finished' when it is dark, crumbly and sweet smelling and you should not be able to identify the original pieces of the ingredients.
- _____ Peat is a naturally occurring substance made from decaying vegetation.
- _____ Compost is an inorganic fertiliser.
- _____ Tumblers can be used to make compost.
- _____ Coffee grounds, fruit peels, hair are good sources of nitrogen.
- _____ Grass chippings, dried leaves, straw are good sources carbon.

A. Composting Basics - Four Primary Elements: Food, Water, Air, Microbes

The Composting basics are all about creating a good habitat in your compost for the organisms that work in the decomposition cycle. Compost is a living ecosystem that supports a complex web of microbes and other organisms. Like you and I they need food, water, and air. No matter what method of composting you choose you will need to pay attention to and supply these composting basics or life essentials.

B. What Should I Compost?

<u>Do Compost:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Vegetable scraps· Fruit rinds, cores, pits, peels· Coffee grounds, filters· Tea bags, loose leaf tea· Pasta, breads, cereals, grains· Paper napkins, towels· Egg shells, hair	<u>Do Not Compost:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Meat· Fish and poultry· Bones· Oily foods· Cheese· Butter, other dairy products· Other animal products
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C: Benefits of Composting:

- Encourages the growth of earthworms and other macro-organisms, whose tunneling makes room for water and air.

¹ IRDC is a registered community interest company

- Provides nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur and micro-organisms that are essential for plant growth
- Acts as a glue, holding water and soil particles together, and makes soil resistant to erosion
- Binds itself to polluting metals, pesticides and other contaminants to prevent them from washing into waterways or being absorbed by plants
- Suppresses soil-borne diseases and plant pathogens (a number of plant and lawn diseases are suppressed by micro-organisms found in compost)

D. High Quality Composts:

High quality compost comes from a carefully tended compost pile with the rich mixture of 'brown' and 'green' matters, water and oxygen. When all is working optimally in pile it will reach high temperature of 120 – 150 degree Fahrenheit (F). The high heat will kill pathogens, weed seeds but the beneficial Mycorrhizae will survive. Mycorrhiza is a fungus which grows in association with the roots of a plant in a symbiotic or mildly pathogenic relationship. There is a natural 'cooling off' period and then the compost is ***finished compost***² or humus and can be put to use.

E. How to make high quality compost?

1. Create a fast, hot compost pile (in a bin or on the ground) and add all the composting ingredients at once. If you manage your compost pile well you can have a ***finished compost***² in 2- 8 weeks.
2. Fill your compost bin or, build the pile by layering equal amount of brown and green ingredients. The pile should not be bigger than 3 foot cube since you will need to be able to turn it off. If you are composting outside the bin, in a windy area, you should go up to a 4 foot size to retain the heat better with this fast process you will need to watch the balance of brown and green ingredients as the composting goes along, and be prepared to supplement with more 'brown' or 'green' if the pile develops problems.
3. Speed up the decomposition process by using small pieces of ingredients (shredded leaves, not whole leaves for instance), don't use branches in a fast compost piles because they take longer to breakdown.
4. Spray water on each layer. Kick off the speed in the pile by adding compost ingredients and spraying water on the pile. Keep the pile as moist as a wrung out sponge at all times.
5. Be careful when you touch the pile because it will be hot using this composting technique. Turn the pile every three days with a digging fork or compost aerator tool.

F. Brown, Green Characteristics:

Brown	Green
. Decay very slow	.Decay fast
. Course brown can keep pile aerated	. Poor aeration- may have foul orders if completed alone
. Tie up nitrogen in soil if not fully	. Supply nitrogen for composting

² Compost is finished when it is dark, crumbly and sweet smelling. You should not be able to identify the original pieces of the ingredients.

composted	
. Usually contains less water	. Usually contains more water

G. Composts terminologies: Black gold, finished compost, Decomposed, Aerobic, Anaerobic, Powerhouse, Critters, Brown, Green, Mycorrhiza, Ecosystem, Cooling off.