

# How to Compost



## What's composting?

Composting makes organic matter which improves the soil's ability to hold air and water and adds nutrients.



## Where to Use Compost

**Everywhere!** Work compost into your **garden** soil in the spring or fall. Topdress your **lawn** with compost around Labor Day to build your topsoil. Thinly spread compost up to an inch from the **base of trees or shrubs**. When using your compost regularly, send a sample to the UMaine Soil Lab or Woods End for nutrient testing.

## Location, Location, Location

Place it in a **convenient location** as you'll be adding material several times each week, even in the winter.

## What to Compost

Build a healthy compost pile with a mix of green and brown materials. Never compost diseased plant materials.

**From the Kitchen:** Fruit and vegetable scraps, eggshells, houseplant cuttings, coffee grounds and filters, bread, rice, pasta, tea bags, and paper napkins.

**From the Yard:** Flowers, vegetables, plant trimmings, small amounts of grass clippings, leaves, straw and hay, small twigs, and dried weeds.

## Cautions

Keep your compost away from waterbodies and wetland as it will leach nutrients into the water and grow algae.

Completely dry out any invasive plants before composting them so they don't regrow.

## How to Compost

Speed up the process with these 4 tips:

1. **Chop:** Cut up larger items like watermelon rinds before putting them in the compost.
2. **Stir:** Mix the new material into the pile to add oxygen.
3. **Cover:** Cover your food waste with leaves to add carbon and reduce the chance of odors or fruit flies.
4. **Moisture:** Keep the material in your composter moist by adding water to your kitchen transport container. This also helps remove the scraps easily from your container when you empty it.

## Harvesting Your Compost

Once you can't identify the materials you added and it looks like soil, your compost is ready to use!

1. **Using a compost bin:** Open the door and dig the finished material out of the bottom for small amounts or set aside any unfinished compost before emptying the bin.
2. **Using a compost pile:** Have two or more sections to allow you to rotate the piles. You'll actively add new material to one section while the other section matures for harvesting. Once you've used the mature compost, you'll switch section sides and begin adding new material to the empty section while allowing the other pile to mature for use.