

1 Real Estate Advisor



Why Compost?

Perhaps you've heard a gardener talk about 'turning your garbage into gold'. Or maybe you're concerned about the amount of waste that's added yearly to your local landfill. Chances are though, somewhere you've heard about the benefits of composting. So what's all the fuss about?

Well here are a few things to keep in mind.

According to the EPA, roughly 250 million tons of waste was generated by people living in the United States in 2008. Nearly two-thirds of the stuff going into waste dumps and landfills that year was organic material – yard trimmings, food scraps, wood waste, paper and paper products. To reduce the sheer amount of waste and better use the organic materials, many communities throughout the country have begun to promote composting programs.

Ideally, if more people composted their waste instead of throwing it out, we could put fewer raw materials into landfills and instead create healthy, naturally fertilizing soil.

So what is composting exactly?

Composting is the process of taking waste from plants and animals and decomposing it from its original form into nutrient rich soil through aerobic decomposition. The soil that is created from composting is great for plants and the environment in that it can lessen the chance of disease in growing crops, reduce the need to chemical fertilizers or pesticides and promote higher yields when used to grow crops.

If you're interesting reducing the waste out-put in your own home, having access to nutrient rich soil for your house plants, flower beds or a home garden, or all of the above, starting your own composting pile is pretty simple.

Composting at Home

The process of composting at home is simple and straightforward. All you need is the right space, a suitable bin, and organic materials (aka your trash). Then you let everything "cook" to get the good stuff.

Step 1: Find a suitable bin

Composting bins can be purchased online or found at your local garden center. There is a great variety to choose from to suit all sorts of needs.

Step 2: Find the right location

Many experienced gardeners suggest putting your bin right next to your garden. That way you have easy access to the soil that it will eventually produce. Bins placed in areas with decent ventilation and a little bit of shade will do the best. You may want to also consider the drainage around your bin.

Step 3: Add Organic Waste Materials

Adding organic waste to your new composting pile is as simple as taking out the garbage. Just be sure not to pack everything down too tightly.

The best mixes of organic waste for composting are a balanced mix between fibrous materials and "green stuff" along with food waste. Think Leaves, wood chips, yard trimmings and then grass clips plus your food waste.

Step 4: Aerate and Cook

Your compost pile will need a little bit of water and a little bit of air over time to complete the "cooking" process. You can easily turn over the pile with a pitch fork to add the extra air needed. Getting the amount of water right can be a little bit trickier. You don't want too much. Adding lots of fresh, green grass clippings is an easy way to add enough water. Otherwise just add a little bit of water with the hose. Conversely, if you live in an area that has a lot of rain, consider putting a rain guard over your compost so it doesn't get too soggy.

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