

The Hornet's Nest Net Resource

Composting for Beginners: Building Your Soil This Fall & Winter

Composting turns everyday kitchen scraps and yard waste into rich, living soil. Starting in fall and winter gives you a head start—by spring, your garden will thank you with healthy, vibrant growth.

Why Compost?

- Reduces kitchen and yard waste.
- Improves soil structure and moisture retention.
- Provides natural nutrients—no chemicals needed.
- Saves money on soil and fertilizers.

Composting Basics

Composting works best with a mix of 'greens' and 'browns' to balance nutrients and keep your pile active.

Greens (Nitrogen-rich): Fruit & veggie scraps, coffee grounds, grass clippings.

Browns (Carbon-rich): Dry leaves, straw, shredded paper, cardboard.

Aim for about 2 parts browns to 1 part greens. Keep the pile moist (like a wrung-out sponge) and turn occasionally for airflow.

Getting Started This Fall

- Choose a spot or bin—backyard pile, tote, or compost tumbler.
- Add alternating layers of greens and browns.
- Avoid meat, dairy, oily foods, and pet waste.
- Save fall leaves—they're excellent compost material!
- Cover your pile with straw, cardboard, or leaves to hold warmth through winter.

Troubleshooting Tips

- If it smells: add more browns and mix.
- If it's dry: sprinkle water or add damp leaves.
- If it's not breaking down: add greens or turn for more air.
- Cover new scraps with browns to discourage pests.

When Is It Ready?

Finished compost is dark, crumbly, and smells earthy—not like food. Mix it into garden beds or use it as top dressing in spring for rich, healthy soil.

Start small this fall. Save your scraps, layer your leaves, and let nature do the work. By spring, you'll have 'black gold' ready to nourish your garden!