



Composting

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is the natural breakdown of food and yard waste into a nutrient-rich material which can be added to your gardens.



PLEASE CONTACT US FOR BROCHURES ABOUT LEAF MULCHING AND GRASSCYCLING

LEAF MULCHING

Leaf mulching is the process of shredding leaves with a lawnmower and using them as mulch on your gardens and lawn.



GRASSCYCLING

Grasscycling is the recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn after mowing.



Questions?

Please contact York Region at **905-895-1200** and press 3 for Solid Waste Management or visit **www.york.ca**



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Composting



WHY COMPOST?

Soil Enrichment

Compost improves soil structure to enhance plant growth (similar to peat moss).

Water Conservation

Compost helps soil retain moisture which reduces the need for watering.

Waste Reduction

Composting can reduce your household waste by 30%. If everyone composted, it would dramatically reduce the amount of household garbage Regional residents landfill in Michigan.

Prevent Plant Disease

Compost contains natural antibiotics that suppress disease in plants.

HOW DO I COMPOST?

- ◆ Choose a sunny location with good drainage for your composter.
- ◆ Place a base (i.e. chicken wire) on the ground and set the composter on top of the base.
- ◆ Place kitchen scraps (i.e. greens¹) with yard waste (i.e. browns²) in alternating layers and turn regularly.
- ◆ Place some "finished compost" or garden soil in a thin layer (2.5 cm or 1 inch) over top of kitchen waste to help speed up the process, reduce the risk of odours and allow for air movement and drainage.
- ◆ Your compost is ready when the texture is dark, crumbly and has a pleasant earth-like smell. It will normally take a year or more.

WHERE CAN I GET A COMPOSTER?

Make One

For a free composting guide please call 905-895-1200 and press 3 for Solid Waste Management or visit www.york.ca

Buy One

Composters are sold at various garden centres and nurseries throughout the Region. Composters may also be available from your local municipality.



WHAT CAN I COMPOST?

YARD WASTE

- leaves
- grass clippings
- wood chips
- plants
- flowers
- weeds (before they go to seed)
- straw or hay

KITCHEN SCRAPS

- fruits & vegetables
- egg shells
- tea bags/leaves
- coffee grounds/ filters
- rice, bread, pasta (no oil or sauce)

OTHER

- hair
- sawdust (non-treated wood)

DO NOT BACKYARD COMPOST

- bones
- fish
- dog or cat waste
- dairy products
- rhubarb leaves and other toxic plants
- fatty foods such as cheese
- salad dressing
- leftover cooking oil
- plants infected with disease
- meats
- walnut shell, walnut leaves

COMPOSTING TIPS

- ◆ Always keep your compost material as moist as a damp sponge.
- ◆ Chop waste into smaller bits for faster decomposition.
- ◆ Don't add thick layers of any one material, particularly grass; mix it with other material instead.
- ◆ You can compost throughout the winter. The composting process slows down but speeds up again in the spring.

SYMPTOMS	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Compost has a bad odour	Not enough air or too wet	Turn it to aerate/ Add dry materials
Process appears too slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compost is too dry or • Compost is frozen or • Poor Carbon to Nitrogen ratio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moisten and mix thoroughly • Decomposition will continue in the spring • Add greens¹ or browns² as required
Compost is too wet	Poor drainage or soaked from rainfall	Move to a location with proper drainage/ Put a lid on it
Insects or animal pests	Meat/fish or fatty foods in composter	Avoid adding these; dig in all food wastes and cover with soil
Damp and sweet smelling	Lack of nitrogen	Mix in greens ¹

¹ Greens: Materials high in nitrogen such as vegetables, fresh manure or grass.

² Browns: Materials high in carbon such as dried leaves.