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Hot & Fast Compost Recipe

Hot and Fast Composting is building and actively mixing a pile to produce disease-killing temperatures and can yield finished compost within a month. A minimum “batch” is enough to fill a plastic bin or build a pile at least 3 feet high and 3 feet in diameter. This practice destroys most plant diseases, weeds, and weed seeds.

Ingredients:

Three to 4 or more wheelbarrows of “green” yard materials – such as grass clippings and garden debris

Three to 4 or more wheelbarrows of “brown” materials –such as leaves, dry weeds, brush, and woody prunings.

Vegetables and fruit scraps and coffee grounds (as available)

Water

Tools:

Pitchfork

Square-point shovel or machete (optional)

Rotary lawnmower or chipper-shredder (when composting woody material or dry leaves)

Water hose with spray head

Compost bin (optional)

Tarp, burlap, or black plastic for covering the pile and/or mixing materials (optional)

Compost thermometer (optional)

Directions:

1. Pick a 4-foot by 8-foot area where water does not puddle when it rains, preferably a shaded spot.
2. Chop up the gathered stalks and garden plants with shovel or machete. Chip or shred woody trimmings.
3. Cover half of the 4-foot by 8-foot area with a 6-inch layer of “brown” materials.
4. Add a 3-inch layer of fresh “green” materials, and add a dash of soil or finished compost.
5. Mix this layer lightly into the layer below it with a hoe or hand cultivator.
6. Top with a 3-inch layer of “brown” materials and add water until it is moist.

7. Repeat steps four through six until the pile is a least 3 feet high. Note: The pile should be completely covered with 4 inches or more of brown materials. Food materials should be mixed in and buried deep in the pile.
8. Turn the pile over every one to two weeks with a pitchfork or shovel until the pile does not re-heat much after turning. With each turning, move dry materials from the edges into the middle of the new pile, and add water as needed.
9. Let the pile cure for two weeks before using.