



DuPage County

Backyard Composting

Make Fertilizer - Not Garbage!

Turn vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells and more into fertile soil through backyard composting. Instead of putting this material into the weekly trash, create an earth friendly compost pile and recycle this waste. By properly mixing select organic materials from your home, a nutrient rich soil amendment can be produced for use on the lawn and garden.

Keep your compost pile or enclosure away from property lines! If you are located in an incorporated area, follow your municipal zoning rules for backyard composting. For unincorporated DuPage County, follow the County Zoning Ordinance and keep compost away from lot lines at these distances:

Lots 20,000 sq. ft. and under

3 ft. from rear lot lines

3 ft. from interior side lot lines

30 ft. from corner lot lines (if corner lot)

Lots over 20,000 sq. ft.

3 ft. from rear lot lines

10% of lot width or 10 ft. whichever is less, from interior side lot lines

30 ft. from corner lot lines (if corner lot)

Important Information —

Piling up grass clippings in a heap or throwing food scraps in the yard does not constitute proper composting. These organic materials just left on the lawn to rot often draw pests and send odors beyond the backyard. Follow the guidelines in this brochure and learn more (see backside).

DuPage County

Department of Economic Development & Planning

421 N. County Farm Road

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Call: 630-407-6700 Email: recycle@dupageco.org/sustainability

www.dupageco.org/sustainability



General Composting Considerations

The decomposition of organic materials is made possible with 4 ingredients. They are:

Greens + Browns + Oxygen + Moisture

Greens consist of grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps, and coffee grounds. Browns consist of leaves, small twigs, mulch, straw, and corn cobs. Ideally, browns and greens should be added to the pile at about a 1:1 ratio, or equal parts.

- ◆ Turn your greens and browns with a shovel or pitchfork every 3 to 5 days to aerate pile.
- ◆ Add a little water or more greens if pile is dry or inactive. Conversely, a soggy pile needs more browns.
- ◆ Stop adding material to the pile if you cannot keep the proper ratio as explained above.
- ◆ Be cautious of adding meat, cheese, or bread to a home compost pile. These food items can cause mal odors and draw pests. If the pile smells or looks bad - you will get complaints.
- ◆ Composting takes time. Start slowly until you understand how it works.
- ◆ Learn more online or at your local library.

Check your local hardware retailer or shop online to find a variety of compost bins.



Why Compost?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency determined that food waste is the single largest type of waste going to America's landfills. More than 33 million tons of food are thrown away every year.

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic waste into a beneficial soil amendment. Composting allows for "resource efficiency and creates a useful product" (US EPA).

Composting. . . .

reduces waste sent to landfills;

creates a product that breaks-up clay soils and adds moisture content; and,

gives us a non-chemical fertilizer that grows abundant vegetable and flower gardens.