

CONTACT
INFORMATION



TNRD Environmental Services

#300-465 Victoria Street
Kamloops, BC V2C 2A9

Email: recyclenow@tnrd.ca

Website: www.tnrd.ca

Phone: 1-877-377-8673
or (250) 377-7199

Fax: 250-374-6489

Check out your local TNRD library for an up-to-date collection of books and video recordings on composting and related activities.



Backyard Composting

Your guide to organics waste reduction and creating nutrient-rich soil



How to Compost

Composting is easy to do and can reduce your household waste by roughly 1/3 to 1/2. And better yet, the results are great for your lawn and garden. To help get you started, the TNRD offers handy backyard composters at a discounted rate. These backyard composters are available in Kamloops at Purity Feed Co. Ltd., and Lyons Landscaping as well as various municipal offices and community centers throughout the TNRD.

How to get started

1. Choose a place for your compost, sheltered with good drainage, some sun and convenient to use.
2. Buy a composter or build your own bin.
3. If you have a large supply of compostables ready, make alternate layers of greens and browns.
4. If only adding to the composter occasionally, keep in mind the proportion of green to brown. For every bucket of green add one to two buckets of brown.
5. Add water as needed when building or adding to your compost. Compost should be only as damp as a well wrung out sponge.
6. Turn your compost every week or two. You can also purchase an aerator to use whenever you add materials to the compost. Turning helps bury the new materials, adds air to the compost and will speed up the composting.



Tips for faster compost

- Chop materials into small pieces and shred leaves before adding to composter so materials will break down faster.
- Mix brown and greens together thoroughly and keep proportions balanced.
- Keep your compost moist.
- Aerate often, at least twice a week.



What to compost



GREENS

HOUSE	YARD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable/fruit peels and scraps • Coffee grounds, tea bags, paper filters • Eggshells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass clippings • Weeds – not those with mature seed heads • Green leaves and clippings • Thinnings from vegetable garden • Garden plants, vines and annuals at end of season • Manure – not from pets

BROWNS

HOUSE	YARD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers, shredded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry leaves • Brown grass clippings • Dried prunings and cuttings • Straw

What not to compost

HOUSE	YARD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat/bone/fish scraps • Fats/oils • Grains • Pet waste • Dairy products • Walnut shells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diseased plants • Weeds with mature seed heads • Persistent weeds like quack grass



Uses For Compost

Finished compost will be dark coloured and crumble easily when handled. The ideal time to add compost to your garden is a month or so before planting as this allows the compost time to stabilize. Unfinished compost can slow germination and growth of some plants.



SPRING

- Add two to eight cm. of compost to your vegetable garden and mix in with the top ten cm. of soil.
- Use only finished compost at planting time and add to the furrows when planting seeds.
- Use finished compost in the planting holes when setting out seedlings.
- Add a layer of compost to your flower garden and work into the top few cm. of soil.
- Topdress your lawn with screened finished compost and bonemeal.
- Repair bare spots in the lawn by working finished compost into the top five cm. Rake and tamp well, then soak the areas and sow grass seed.
- Repot your household plants using the fine screened compost to replace up to one quarter of the total soil.
- Make compost tea to use as a liquid fertilizer.

SUMMER

- Mix compost equally with soil and topdress your vegetable and flower gardens when plants start to grow rapidly.
- Topdress the soil around shrubs and water thoroughly.
- Cultivate the top five cm. of soil in a ring around your trees (30 to 60 cm. from base to 30 cm. past drip line) and rake in two to five cm. of compost.

FALL

- Give poor soil a fall treatment of compost by digging the soil 30 to 40 cm. deep and mixing in half-finished compost.
- Mix compost with soil and use to hill your roses for winter protection.

QUESTIONS

Does the compost have to be in full sun?

No. It can be in shade or part sun. The sun helps the compost heat up but can also cause it to dry out faster.

Should my compost get hot?

Yes, heat makes the materials compost faster. The center of the compost can get up to 77°C. To check the temperature put a metal pipe into the center of the compost; if it is warm you know the compost is heating properly.

Is compost starter necessary?

No, there are sufficient microorganisms on the compostable materials to start the compost working. However, some people feel that sprinkling some soil or finished compost in the new compost pile will speed things up.

Can I compost in the winter?

Yes, you can continue to add materials to your composter over the winter months. To activate the compost in the spring, aerate well, check the moisture and adjust if necessary. Add extra browns if compost is too wet. And remember, winter composting is made easier with a

conveniently placed compost bin – plan ahead for successful composting year round.

Will bears be attracted to the compost?

Yes, bears will be drawn to the kitchen scraps. If you live in an area with bears, compost only grass, leaves and weeds. You may also want to try composting kitchen waste indoors using worms. Check in with the TNRD for the next community worm composting workshop near you.



Too many grass clippings?

- Let them dry in the sun before adding to the composter to reduce matting problems and possible bad smells.
- Leave them on your lawn. “Grasscycling” with a mulching mower returns nutrients to the soil and saves you work.
- Mix them with leaves or other dry materials to help reduce matting in the compost.
- Use them as a mulch between the rows of your vegetable garden or flowers to help keep down weeds.
- Note: If you have used weed killers on your lawn do not compost or mulch the clippings.



Too many leaves?

- Use your mower to shred the leaves to reduce their volume before composting.
- Bag extra shredded leaves to add to compost when needed.
- Dig some shredded leaves into your garden in the fall to add nutrients to your garden.
- Make leaf mold. It's easy with a wire enclosure; just shred, wet thoroughly, tamp down and leave until summer.
- Use shredded leaves as a mulch to protect plants during the winter.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY COMPOST?

It smells like ammonia.

Compost has too many greens; add more browns such as leaves and turn pile.

It smells like rotten eggs.

Compost is too wet; turn more often to add air.

The compost didn't get hot.

If it is damp and does not smell bad, add more green nitrogen-rich material.

The composting is taking too long.

If compost is damp – items in compost may be too large, chop into small pieces and aerate more often. If compost is dry – turn pile and add water until whole pile is damp.

There are matted layers of grass or leaves not composting

Break up layers with garden fork and rebuild compost pile. Shred leaves before adding to pile; add only thin layers of grass.

The compost is attracting lots of flies.

Layer a couple of centimeters of dirt, dry leaves or grass clippings on top of the compost. Bury all new kitchen waste in center of pile. More frequent turning will also help to keep the temperature high enough to discourage fly breeding.

There is an ant colony in the compost

Aerate more often and make sure pile is moist – keep the ants from becoming too comfortable.



COMPOST TEA is an easy-to-make organic liquid fertilizer. Put a shovelful of finished compost into a cheesecloth or burlap bag. Tie the top closed and submerge in a bucket of water. Cover the bucket and let the “tea” steep for up to a week. The “tea” will get stronger the longer it steeps. You can use this full strength or dilute it with water for a milder fertilizer. You can then reuse the compost for a new batch of “tea” or empty the compost into your garden and use new compost for your next bucket of “tea.”

Also see our helpful brochure on 'Worm Composting'

